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L E T T E R S

TO A

Y O U N G L A D Y,

ON A VARIETY OF

USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS:

CALCULATED TO

IMPROVE THE HEART, TO FORM THE MANNERS,
AND ENLIGHTEN THE UNDERSTANDING.

"That our Daughters may be as polished Corners of the Temple."

BY THE REV. JOHN BENNETT,
Author of Strictures on Female Education

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

HARTFORD:
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1798.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Letters have long lain by the author in a state of neglect ; indeed of uncertainty whether the publication of them would do any credit to himself, or service to the world. Nor does he think, that he should ever have presumed to expose them before the formidable tribunal of the public, unless animated by the name of the very exalted and amiable personage, to whom they are addressed.

If they deserve no fame, they ought, however, in his opinion, to be branded with no malignant or invidious censure, as their intention is really to serve the fairest and most amiable part of the creation ; to rouse young ladies from a vacant or insipid life, into one of usefulness, and laudable exertion—to recal them from visionary novels and romances into solid reading and reflection—and from the criminal absurdities of fashion, to the simplicity of nature and the dignity of virtue. He has attempted a method of uniting, in their character, the graces with the virtues ; an amiable heart with elegant manners and an enlightened understanding ; and if he should not have succeeded, is, by no means the first person, who has misjudged his powers, “ qui magnis excidit ausis,” and can reflect for his comfort, that laudable projects are perhaps the whole, that lies within the narrow circle, or the talents of the bulk of mortals.

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This Work recommends, in the following Order,

I. RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE with a List of proper Writers.

II. Polite Knowledge, as it relates to the *Belles Lettres* in general ; Epistolary writing, History, the Lives of particular Persons, Geography, Natural History, Astronomy, Poetry, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Heraldry, Voyages, Travels, &c. with a catalogue of, and criticisms upon, the most approved authors under each article.

III. Accomplishments, as displayed in Needlework, Embroidery, Drawing, Music, Dancing, Drefs, Politeness, &c.

IV. Prudential conduct and maxims, with respect to Amusements, Love, Courtship, Marriage, &c.

TO THE
Q U E E N.

M A D A M,

THE encouragement of every thing virtuous and laudable has been a distinguishing characteristic of your reign ; and if licentiousness and vice have infested the kingdom, it is not because they have received any countenance from your sovereign authority, or even wanted its most salutary restraints and pointed opposition.

To your own sex, in particular, you have exhibited a most instructive and animating example.—You have taught them by a silent, but impressive language, to depend more for real influence and esteem, on the mild, the soft, and the attractive graces, than on all the perishable appendages of greatness, illustrious birth, political interference, or even the dazzling splendours of a throne.

In an age, when artificial gaieties have almost banished the sweeter pleasures of simplicity and nature, you have displayed as great a fondness, as the neces-

sary avocations of royalty would permit, for domestic retirement. Fashionable mothers might have derived a lesson from your conduct. Your royal breast has appeared to vibrate with a more exquisite delight, to the caresses of a tender offspring, in the shades of Windsor, than it ever received from crowded levees, or the superbest brilliance of a court.

In a period of false refinement, when conjugal fidelity has not appeared a favourite virtue, your Majesty has been a model of as delicate an attachment, as ever graced the purest ages of antiquity, or occurs in the voluminous annals of the world. And in an era of fastidious affluence, when Christianity has been undermined by the subtilty of sceptics, and still more disgraced by the lukewarmness and irregularities of its professors; when its grand bulwark, the christian sabbath, has been daringly attacked, particularly amongst the higher ranks of people, by many kinds of licentious amusement, you have done every thing in co-operation with our beloved Monarch, to stop the progress of the evil, that could result from virtuous precepts, or the un sullied lustre of example.

Amidst this *general* assemblage of virtues, there is one point, however, in which your Majesty's character shines forth with *peculiar* lustre, and will command the grateful veneration of the most distant posterity. It is that, which is particularly enforced in this work, and so closely interwoven with the most essential interest of society—female education. This, your Majesty is allowed to have studied with greater earnestness than any woman throughout your dominions; I may add, with better success. Your royal daughters are a daily *living* comment on the excellence of your instructions, and are infinitely more celebrated for the graces of their hearts, the elegance of their manners,

and the improvement of their understanding, than the magnificence of their family, or the splendour of their birth.

I cannot, therefore, but be deeply sensible of the high honour, that was conferred on me, when your Majesty condescended to look into this work in manuscript, and give me the unreserved privilege of inscribing it to your protection ; and I would take a respectful leave of your Majesty with uttering an earnest wish, which, elevated as you are, must come near the heart—that the daughters you have cultivated with such a tender assiduity, may long continue (what they *are*,) the ornament of their sex—of their kingdom—of Europe—the prop, when she wants it, of their declining parent ; your consolers in that awful moment, when even Majesty must be dust, and your companions in that heaven, where the virtues will remain, though titles and greatness and distinctions are forgotten !

I have the honor to be, with the most profound gratitude and respect,

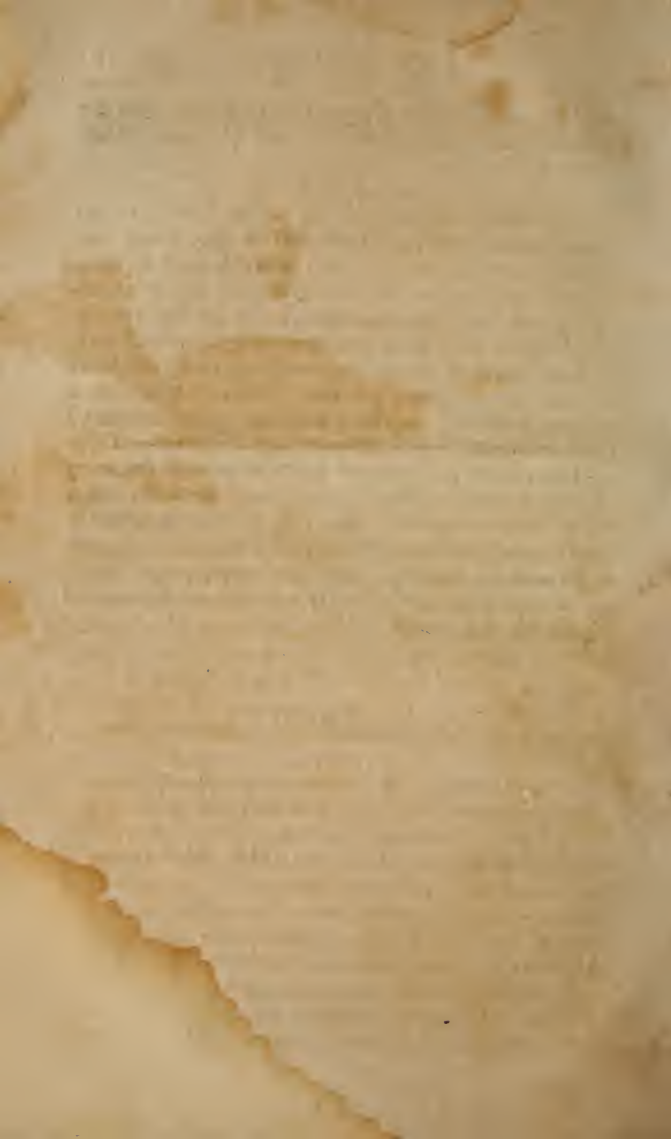
MADAM,

Your MAJESTY'S

most devoted Subject

and Servant,

THE AUTHOR.



LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

To Miss LUCY ———

MY DEAR LUCY,

THOUGH I myself have sustained an heavy loss by the death of your excellent mother, who lived so much in my friendship and esteem, and by her letters and society had conferred upon me some of the sweetest pleasures in human life, yet you alas ! are the principal sufferer by this afflicting dispensation. It would give me the sincerest pleasure, if I knew how to alleviate your grief, or afford you a single moment's consolation.

I need not press on you the doctrines of religion. You have, doubtless, considered who it is, that has deprived you of this invaluable parent ; a God of infinite wisdom, who never strikes, but at the fittest moment ; a God of equal goodness, who without the strongest reasons, would not afflict, and a being of unbounded power, who is abundantly able to make up your loss, and open to you a thousand sources of comfort.

Christianity should exclude all *unreasonable* sorrow. If we believe that our friends are dead in God ; we know that this life is only a vapour ; that our separa-

tion is but for a moment, and that we shall soon be restored to them in a world, where life is without pain, and where friendship is immortal.

Though you are, in the *literal* sense, an orphan, yet the number of friends, to whom you are so justly dear, will render your situation neither solitary, nor defenceless. The sensible, the elegant and the good will think themselves honored by your acquaintance. They will give you credit for inheriting all the amiable qualities of a mother, who was revered, as far as known, whilst nature has so strongly imprinted, on your face, the resemblance of her features.

The scene is still fresh upon my memory, when, in her last moments, she so strongly recommended you to my protection. And though she paid a compliment to my abilities, which only a partial friendship could have excited, she did nothing more than strict justice to the warmth of my affection. I shall really think myself complimented by your correspondence. If you will call me father or brother, you will give an unusual lustre to my name. This fond heart shall vibrate to your wishes and your happiness: and, if you will occasionally visit my little cot, it shall put on all its loveliest charms, and smile in all its gayest attire, to receive so dear and so amiable a stranger. The roses of my humble garden shall, if possible, be doubly sweet; my Jessamines shall emit an unusual fragrance; and if nature will but obey, I will order the *general* scenery to be delightful.

We shall reap, I am assured, *mutual* benefits by this acquaintance. If I am able to communicate to you any little knowledge, you will more than repay it by that ease, delicacy, refinement, confidence and expansion, which the mind never effectually feels, but in the friendship of a sensible and an interesting woman. Such a friendship is the richest cordial of life. Either of the sexes without it, are never what they should be.

Like the best figures, *mutilated*, they appear to disadvantage. Unnatural expedients may be tried to supply its place. Business, ambition, an *over-strained* prudence, or peculiar situations may lead us to deny ourselves so sweet a pleasure ; but, in fact, all human projects and successes are *insipid* without it. They are roseless thorns, a winter without a spring. Pleasures have not their relish, and sorrow wants a bosom to recline on. Our manners have not their proper softness ; our morals their purity, and our souls feel an uncomfortable void.

They, who talk degradingly of women, do not know the value of the treasure they despise. They have not sufficient taste to relish their excellencies, or purity enough to court their acquaintance. They have taken the portrait of *abandoned* women, and they think the features applicable to all.

The softer sex, it is certain, are exceedingly injured by their education. If they were, what they *should* be, they are those lights in the picture of human life, that are intended to cheer all its darknes and its shades.

LETTER II.

THE education of women is unfortunately directed rather to such accomplishments, as will enable them to make a noise and sparkle in the world, than to those qualities, which might ensure their comfort here, and happiness hereafter. Boarding schools consult but little those domestic qualifications, which are confessedly the highest point of usefulness in your sex, and still less that solid piety and virtue, which alone, to an intelligent creature, can be the source of any real, heart-felt enjoyment.

Though religion is indispensably necessary to *both* sexes, and in every possible character and station, yet a woman seems, more peculiarly, to need its enlivening supports, whilst her frame must be confessed to be admirably calculated for the exercise of all the tender and devout affections.

The timidity, arising from the natural weakness and delicacy of your frame ; the numerous diseases, to which you are liable ; that exquisite sensibility, which in many of you, vibrate to the slightest touch of joy or sorrow ; the tremulous anxiety you have for friends, children, a family, which nothing can relieve, but a sense of their being under the protection of God ; the sedentariness of your life, naturally followed with low spirits or *ennui*, whilst we are seeking health and pleasure in the field ; and the many, lonely hours, which in almost every situation, are likely to be your lot, will expose you to a number of *peculiar* sorrows, which you cannot, like the men, either drown in wine, or divert by dissipation.

From the era, that you become marriageable, the sphere of your anxieties and afflictions will be enlarged. The generality of men are far from acting on such strict principles of honour and integrity, in their connections with you, as they would rigidly observe, in matters of a much more trivial importance. Some delight in sporting with your nicest sensibilities, and afterwards exposing with an *illiberal* triumph, the fondness of a credulous and unsuspecting heart ; others, from fashion merely, and to be called men of gallantry, will say a thousand civil things, and shew as many preferences, with no other view, than to amuse the moment, or acquire a fantastic, visionary honour. A third sort of men (yes it is possible that there should be *male* coquettes !) will do and say every thing to inspire you with fondness, and get possession of your heart, without proceeding to that explanation, which nature has intended to come

from *us*, and which the delicacy of your sex, whatever you may *suffer*, will not permit you to demand. Others, without any particular designs upon you, or improper attentions, (for attachments spring up *insensibly*, and are as possible in one sex, as the other,) may be too agreeable for your safety and repose, and leave you to a silent heartfelt concern, which will prey *doubly* in proportion to its *concealment*—or even when the indissoluble knot of marriage is tied, and you have resigned every thing, till it comes to your name and person, it may be to a man of *mere* integrity, who knows nothing of those many, little, tender attentions, which involve so great a share of a woman's happiness—it may be to a person of great *ambition*, who has neither leisure nor inclination for soft domestic scenes—it may be to a fashionable *Insipid*, who, for the sake of flirting with some elegant fair, and giving your *jealousy* the wildest range, leaves *your* charms and the endearments of his *children* to perish in neglect—nay stakes, perhaps, his very *last* thousand on the uncertainty of game, when the unhappy throw may consign both you and your helpless babes to poverty and ruin—or it may be to a person of a peevish, ill-natured, saturnine cast, *artfully* concealed till he had you in possession, which no attentions can alter, no charms can sweeten, and no vivacity can cheer. Under these, or indeed any *other* distresses, religion is the only true and unfailing resource, and its hopes and prospects, the only solid basis of consolation. In your many, *solitary* moments, what can afford the mind so sovereign a relief, as the exercise of devotion to an all-present God? and, when domestic sorrows cluster upon you, which you cannot reveal to any friend on *earth*, what method have you left, but to pour them into the bosom of your father in *heaven*, who is confessedly the friend of the friendless, always willing to hear their cries, and always able to protect.

The period, my dear girl, I trust, is distant, when such afflictions shall attack your glowing sensibility. They *may* come, however, when I am no more; when this tongue cannot give a word of comfort, nor these eyes drop a sympathizing tear. If they *should*, remember my advice, and let your friendship strew a few, purple flowers over the grave of

Your very faithful and affectionate, ———

LETTER III.

I CONSIDERED devotion, in my last letter, only as an advantage for relieving solitude, or as the best resource under any afflictions. But it is, indeed, in itself one of the highest and most exquisite pleasures; opening the mind to the sublimest contemplations, expanding it with the most delightful hopes, and soothing all its powers with feelings and consolations, that are infinitely beyond the reach, the nature and the littleness of all human things.

There must be a thousand moments in the life of every person, that is not elevated by this devotion, when all earthly blessings will be cold and insipid, and the soul must feel an inexpressible languor, though possessed of all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them.

Though some *fanatics* have made the love of God ridiculous by couching it in too sensual, rapturous, or extravagant language, yet such a passion there is, grounded on the most *rational* principles, and springing from the *purest* source; without which our lives would frequently be miserable, and our duties, the formal, unanimated service of a body without a soul.

If we admire what is great, sublime and magnificent, on *other* occasions; if we love what is amiable, disinterested, benevolent and merciful in many of our fel-

low-creatures, whom we have never seen, what principle either of reason or philosophy forbids us to *admire* and love the same in God, who is the primary author of all amiableness, and at once the source and *fulness* of all possible perfection; and, if we acknowledge him as the parent of all real happiness, where is the absurdity of cultivating an intercourse and *friendship* with him, in order to obtain that happiness, by prayer, reflection, and pious aspirations?

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul: This is the *first* and *great* commandment.

If a virtuous attachment to an imperfect creature here is attended with such transports; if friendship, pure and disinterested, has such exquisite enjoyments, the pleasure, resulting from an intimacy with God must far surpass all human comprehension, and be infinitely more exalted and sublime. It is heaven, compared with earth, or the immensity of space, with the little, narrow boundaries of a prison, or a convent.

LETTER IV.

NEVER fancy, that religion will render you gloomy, or unpleasing. If indeed you take it from the coarse daubings of superstition or of enthusiasm, it is a frightful monster, or a melancholy spectre, that will discourage people from approaching you. If you deduce it from the scriptures, and ground it upon reason, solid argument and truth, it will become a source of perpetual cheerfulness to yourself, that will be reflected on every person and object about you.

Never fail to treat, with the greatest reverence, every thing, that relates to the house of God, to his ministers, to his sacraments, and to his word. To men-

tion any thing, that is sacred, with *levity*, is a certain mark of a depraved heart, and a weak understanding. A witty sneer or sarcasm, on such subjects, is not to be forgiven. It shocks all the sensible and better part of mankind, and, is a species of blasphemy or *sacrilege*.

You remember who has said, that "every woman is at heart a rake." This sentence is severe, and not to be admitted without restrictions. Pope was a rancorous satirist of women. Whatever be his merit in the world of letters, they, at least, owe no extraordinary gratitude to his memory or talents. "Tread lightly upon the ashes of the dead," is a maxim I revere. I would, otherwise, retaliate his insults on the sex, and become the champion of their injured honor. I would insinuate, that the poet was little and deformed, and had experienced few of their caresses or attentions. *Other* writers, however, have charged you with a strong preference for *dissipated* men. But this, surely is the ungenerous aspersions of your enemies, or of those, who have not known the most deserving amongst you, and have formed an unjust and unfavorable conclusion, from the unamiableness of a few.

Your example, I trust, will always contradict such *indiscriminate* censure. The idea, if we could admit it in its full extent, would be unfriendly to the social happiness of life. It would destroy that esteem and confidence in your virtues, which the best and wisest men have uniformly thought no inadequate counterpoise to their sorrows, and their cares. A bad-man is terrible in society; but an unprincipled woman is a monster. The peace, happiness and honor of our sex are so very much in the power of yours after marriage, that the most abandoned libertine shudders at the thought of an union with a woman, who has not piety and virtue. His intimacy with some females, of a *certain description*, has given him such a disgusting picture, as will never be forgotten. In his moments of reflexion, he

execrates his folly, and, when he deliberates, whom he should choose for the companion of *his life*, appeals from the treacherous, *ruffled* bosom of an harlot, to one, that will be always faithful, and always serene. Without *piety*, indeed, a woman can never fully possess the true powers of pleasing. She will want that meek benevolence, sympathy and softness, which give an inexpressible *lustre* to her features, and such a wonderful ascendancy over our affections. We shall not *otherwise* approach her with confidence, or dare to repose any of our secrets, our concerns or our sorrows, in her sympathizing breast.

LETTER V.

MY DEAR GIRL,

IF your mind is in a proper frame, every thing in you and about you will inculcate the necessity, and prompt you to the continual exercise of, devotion. You will find yourself encompassed with innumerable fears, weaknesses, wants, sorrows, diseases, wishes, hopes, under which all human creatures will be unable to assist, or give you any adequate relief; but wherever you cast your eyes, you will, at the same time, be environed with the immensity of a Being, who is possessed of all possible perfections, and who holdeth the issues of life and death, of happiness and misery, solely in his hands.

The power, majesty, grandeur and wisdom of this Being are discernable in every part of your frame, in every function of your body, and operation of your mind, nay in the curious and exquisite formation of every animal and insect. They are seen, on a still *sublim-
er* scale, in the size, the distances, grandeur, and won-

derful revolution of the heavenly bodies ; in the beautifully variegated canopy of heaven, in all the delicious landſkips of nature, in the pleaſing ſucceſſion of day and night, ſpring and autumn, ſummer and winter. In ſhort, winds and ſtorms, thunder and lightning, earthquakes and volcanoes, the grand, magnificent ocean, waves and comets, fulfilling his word, appearing and receding, at his ſovereign command ; flowers, bloſſoms, fruits, foſſils, minerals, petrefactions, precipices, hills, caverns, valleys, *all* tell you, that their former is immensely magnificent, “ that he doeth what he will in “ the armies of heaven, and amongſt the inhabitants of “ the earth, and that none can withſtand the thunder “ of his power.”

This God then is *able* to gratify your wiſhes, and ſupport you under all your ſufferings ; he has *wiſdom* enough to protect and guide you ; the queſtion then is ; is he *willing* ? On this head, hearken to all nature, for it ſpeaks aloud. Look through the numberleſs orders and gradations of animals, inſects, nay the meaneſt reptiles, and you will be aſtoniſhed with the attention, that has been lavished on them, in the contrivance of their frame, the allotment of their ſituation, and the proviſion, made for their continual ſupport. *They are happy.* Shift your eye to all the *inanimate* creation, and you will find it a ſcene of harmony, of order, and beauty, and ſeemingly conſtructed for our *gratification*. Lovely pictureſque views delight our imagination ; ſhrubs and plants and flowers regale us with aromatic ſmells. But a poet, of very deſcriptive talents, ſhall ſpeak on this occaſion.

Wherefore nature's form
So exquiſitely fair ? her breath perfum'd
With ſuch ethereal ſweetneſs ? whence her voice,
Inform'd at will, to raiſe or to depreſs
Th' impaſſion'd ſoul, and whence the robes of light,
Which thus inveſt her with more lovely pomp,

Than fancy can describe ? whence but from *Thee*,
 O source divine of never failing love,
 And thy unmeasur'd goodness ? not content
 With ev'ry food of life to nourish man,
 Thou mak'st all nature, beauty to his eye,
 Or music to his ear ; well pleas'd he scans
 The goodly prospect, and with inward smiles,
 Treads the gay verdure of the painted plain,
 Beholds the azure canopy of heav'n,
 And living lamps, that overarch his head
 With more than regal splendour, lends his ears
 To the full choir of water, air, and earth.

In every part

We trace the bright impressions of his hand,
 In earth, or air, the meadow's purple stores,
 The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin form,
 Blooming with rosy smiles, we see pourtray'd
 That *uncreated* beauty, which delights
 The mind supreme—

Indeed, if you *reason* for a moment why could the Almighty create at all, but to *diffuse* and variegate enjoyment ? Inexhaustible source of happiness, from all eternity, he needed not, and, in fact, could not receive, an *addition* to his *own*. In himself supremely blessed, fountain of eternal majesty and splendour, adored by seraphs, surrounded by myriads of angels and archangels, what dignity could *he* derive from the existence, or services of man, who is but a worm, or the production of ten thousand worlds ? It was infinite wisdom, therefore, that sketched out the plan of universal nature, and *all-communicative* goodness, that bade so many worlds exist, and bade them to be *happy*. The supreme and gracious former wished to communicate some scattered rays of his glory and his blessedness to this extended world of matter and of life, and has therefore replenished every leaf, every drop of water, and every *possibility* of space with shoals of inhabitants ; for

Scarce buds a leaf, or springs the lowest weed,
 But little flocks upon its bosom feed ;
 No fruit our palate courts, or taste our smell,
 But on its fragrant bosom, *nations* dwell.

Is it not then a certain conclusion, that he created you, as well as all *inferior* animals for happiness ? On *this* you may depend, as much as you can upon the *certainty* of your existence, and that he is always more *willing* to be your protector, than you are ready to request it.

Open the *sacred book*, and, from beginning to end, it will confirm this opinion, and exalt your ideas of the divine perfections. “ I delight in exercising loving-kindness, saith the Lord.—The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. If he clothes the grass of the field, which, to-day, is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, how much more shall he clothe you, O ye of little faith ?” *That* religion is built on *wrong* notions, or a *melancholy* temper, that fills us with *imaginary* terrors. All nature breathes a language of hope and mercy. And *nature* is the messenger of God.

It is true there is *evil* in the world, as well as good ; there are marks of *judgment*, as well as mercy. There are hurricanes, as well as fanning breezes ; *noxious* are intermixed with useful animals ; *poisonous* and salutary herbs grow *beside* each other, and roses have their thorns. There are wars and rumours of wars ; there are earthquakes, that desolate *whole* countries ; a thousand forms of disease ; a thousand modifications of sorrow, anxiety, death. If he, who sits at the helm, be so gracious, whence all this disorder ? If his infinite power be combined with equal wisdom and goodness, why did he not prevent it ?

If men were not to be free agents, the *total* prevention of sin and evil seems an *impossibility*. Moral *liberty* could not consist with a *mechanical*, forced obedi-

ence ; and if we had *not* been free, the idea of punishments or rewards, of an heaven or an hell, would be the greatest of all possible absurdities. So that the question *ultimately* amounts to this, whether it was proper for the Almighty to create such a world at all ? Had we not better reserve the propriety of this conduct to be disputed with him, at his great tribunal ? *There*, I doubt not, we shall be amply convinced, that the creation was a work of infinite *mercy*, as well as power, and that a greater degree of *happiness*, than misery has arisen from it. There too, when we are able to discern with *glorified* eyes, the whole chain of causes and effects, from the beginning, to the end, of time ; the dependence of one link of being on another, and of worlds, on worlds ; this evil we now complain of, may become a means of exalting our ideas of the attributes of the Almighty ; and we shall blush at ourselves for even having questioned his goodness for a moment, or encouraged a reasoning pride, so ill becoming creatures, whose days are few, whose strength is weakness, whose wisdom folly ; and who, in the present *immurement* of their understanding, scarcely know the nature of a blade of grass, or of the very pebbles, on which they tread.

This question concerning the *origin* of evil has puzzled the whole tribe of reasoners and philosophers, from the creation, to the present moment. The scripture alone has solved the enigma to our satisfaction. This deranged state of things is the providential punishment of guilt, but at the same time, contrived in mercy, as a salutary regimen, and as a mode of purifying fallen creatures for the innocence and happiness of a better world. It is a *chaos*, fitted to our *present* constitution, and will refine, as *we* do, into its primitive beauty and splendour.

“ There shall then be new heavens and a new earth,
 “ wherein dwelleth righteousness. The wolf shall
 “ dwell with the lamb, and the leopard lie down with
 “ the kid, when the earth is full of the knowledge of

“ the Lord, as the waters cover the seas.” Resignation, in the mean time, has a balm for suffering, and the faith of a christian “ looketh to a better country, with “ foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

But speculations apart, if you draw nigh to the Almighty, he will draw nigh to you ; if you seek his favor and friendship, all things shall work together for your good. Tribulation, anguish, nakedness, or famine, or peril, or the sword will all be so many instruments, in his hands, of procuring your eternal happiness and glory.

Remember the gift of his only Son to be a sacrifice for your sins, and it is more than a thousand lessons of a mercy beyond a parallel, and that far exceeds all human comprehension.

On so delightful a subject, it is difficult to stop one’s pen, or restrain the sallies of imagination. This idea of the supreme being casts a delicious fragrance over all the real enjoyments of life. It gives an inexpressible poignancy to friendship, and to the affection, with which I shall ever feel myself inviolably yours.

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR GIRL,

DEVOTION, considered simply in itself, is an intercourse betwixt us and God ; betwixt the supreme, self-existent, inconceivable spirit, which formed and preserves the universe, and that particular spirit, with which, for awful reasons, he has animated a portion of *matter* upon earth, that we call man. It is a silent act, in which the soul divests itself of *outward* things, flies into heaven, and pours forth all its wants, wishes, hopes, fears, guilt or pleasures, into the bosom of an *almighty* friend.

Though this devotion, in its first stages, may be a wearisome or *insipid* exercise, yet this arises merely from the depravity of nature, and of our passions. A little *habit* will overcome this reluctance. When you have fairly entered on your journey, “the ways of this wisdom will be ways of pleasantness, and all its paths, peace.”

True devotion, doubtless, requires a considerable degree of *abstraction* from the world. Hence *modern* christians treat it, as a *vision*. Hence many *modern* writers have little of its union. But it glows in the scriptures. It warms us in the fathers. It burned in an Austin, and in many other of those persecuted martyrs, who now are with God.

That we *bear* little of it, is not wonderful. It makes no noise in the circles of the learned or of the elegant. Under an heap of worldly cares, we *smother* the lovely infant, and will not let it breathe. Vanity, ambition, pleasure, avarice, quench the celestial fire. And these alas! are too much the god of *mortals*! Ever since the world began, writers have been amusing us only with *shadows* of this piety, instead of giving us its *soul* and *substance*. Superstition has placed it in opinions, ceremonies, austerities, pilgrimages, *persecution*, an august temple, or splendid imagery, which had little connexion with sentiment or spirit. Enthusiasm has swelled with *unnatural* conceptions, and obtruded a *spurious* offspring on the world, instead of this engaging child of reason and truth; whilst the lukewarm have rested in a few outward duties, which have had no vigor, and, as they sprung not from the heart, never entered the temple of the most High.

Real piety is of a very different, and of a much more *animated*, nature. It looks up to God, sees, hears, feels him, in every event, in every vicissitude, in all places, in all seasons, and upon all occasions. It is theory, vivified by experience. It is faith, *substantiated*

by *mental* enjoyment. It is heaven, transplanted into the human bosom. It is the radiance of the Divinity, warming and incircling man. It is *spiritual* sense, gratified by *spiritual* sensations. Without *this*, all *ceremonies* are inefficacious. Books, prayers, sacraments and meditations are but a body, without a soul, or a statue, without animation.

That man is *capable* of such an intercourse with his maker, there are many *living* witnesses to prove. Without having recourse to the visions of fanatics, or the dreams of enthusiasts, it may be proved to spring from natural and *philosophical* causes. God is a spirit; so is the mind. *Bodies* can have intercourse; so can *souls*. When minds are in an *assimilating* state of purity, they have union with their Maker. This was the bliss of *paradise*; sin interrupted, and holiness must restore it. To a soul, thus disposed, the creator communicates himself, in a manner, which is as insensible to the natural eye, as the falling of dews, but not less refreshing to its secret powers, than *that* is to vegetation.

The primitive saints are describing this, when they speak of their transports. David felt it, when he longed for God, as the heart panteth after the water brooks. St. Paul knew it, when he gloried in his tribulations. It was *embodied* in him, when he was carried up into the third heavens, and heard things, impossible to be uttered. St. Stephen was filled with it, when he saw the heavens open, and prayed for his murderers. By it, martyrs, were supported, when they were stoned, and sawn asunder. And till we feel it in *ourselves*, we shall never fully know, how gracious the Lord is.

If you can acquire this spiritual *abstraction*, you will, at once, have made your fortune for eternity. It will be of little moment, what is your lot on earth, or what the distinguishing vicissitudes of your life. Prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, honor or disgrace, a

cottage or a crown, will all be so many instruments of glory. The whole creation will become a *temple*. Every event and every object will lead your mind to God, and in his greatness and perfections, you will insensibly lose the littleness, the glare and tinsel of all human things.

If I wished only to set off your *person* to the greatest advantage, I would recommend this true *sublime* of religion. It gives a pleasing serenity to the countenance, and a cheerfulness to the spirits beyond the reach of art, or the power of affectation. It communicates a real transport to the mind, which dissipation mimics only for a moment; a sweetness to the disposition, and a *lustre* to the manners which all the airs of modern politeness study but in vain. Easy in yourself, it will make you in perfect good humor with the world, and when you are diffusing happiness around you, “you will only be dealing out the broken fragments, that remain after you have eaten.”

LETTER VII.

THIS devotion, however, though *essentially* a silent intercourse betwixt the soul and God, yet, to creatures, consisting of *matter*, as well as spirit, must be nourished by *external* forms. It must strike the senses, in order to awaken the imagination.

The *bulk* of people, indeed, are so far *materialized*, (if I may thus express it,) and sunk in *sense*, that nothing but outward ceremonies would give them any adequate perception either of the *necessity* or pleasures, of devotion; and even the most *spiritual*, in a state of frailty, will need these powerful calls and lessons to *retrace* the vanishing impressions of their duty.

Public worship and the sacraments are the grand *outwork* of piety. They are the *doors*, by which we enter the sanctuary of God. They are the channels for conveying heavenly grace and vigor to the soul. It is here the Redeemer gives us food, that nourishes to eternal life. It is here he rains down fountains of living water.

Whoever pretends to be *above* these forms, is the *fanatic*, who might as well tell us, that his animal life can be supported without food; whoever despises them, is the Infidel, that does every thing in his power, to root out the remembrance of God from the earth, and violate the dearest interests of mankind. Whoever, *conscientiously* attends, yet considers them, only as *introductory* to good, is a true rational christian, that unites the separate links of matter and spirit, and lets his light shine before men, that they may see his good works, and glorify his father, who is in heaven.

Lukewarmness, an insensibility to all sacred things, scepticism, profligacy, and licentious pleasures are the discriminating traits of those, who neglect, from whatever vain pretences, these means of grace. The best disposed are gradually hardened, and the poor are plunged into such disorders, as bring them to the fatal tree.

LETTER VIII.

ANOTHER excellent method of inkindling piety, is *reading the scriptures*. A christian, indeed, should have this sacred book, ever folded in his breast. There is a richness and a comfort in it, that nothing else can equal. Every word is big with instruction; every sentence is divine. It is a mine, perpetually opening; the deeper we dig, the richer is the ore. It is a feast, adapted to *every* taste; the most

exalted understanding must admire, and the *lowest* cannot fail to comprehend, its instructions.

If people only read for the sake of *entertainment*, where can they find a book equal to the Bible? What other production, either ancient or modern, has such striking passages of the pathetic and sublime, the vehement and impassioned? Where are there such lofty images, such grand conceptions, or such picturesque and animated descriptions, as in the psalms? There is scarcely a person in the world, to whose case some of them are not adapted, nor a sorrow which they cannot sooth. In one part, plaintive, affecting, penitential; in another full of triumph and exultation, ennobling, elevating; here describing the immensity, majesty, omnipotence and omnipresence of God; there the littleness of the world, and the vanity of man; whoever can read them without emotion, must be pronounced void both of piety and taste.

The prophets are the true *sublime* of holy reading. The bold images, metaphors, allusions, and descriptions, with which they abound, have been the admiration of the most accomplished scholars, orators and critics in the world. The proverbs of Solomon and the book of Ecclesiasticus are an excellent system for the government of private life, as well as a fund of spiritual instruction! They have all the *marrow* of our *modern* systems of good breeding, without any of their *poison*. The sacred stories of the scripture are related with amazing simplicity and pathos; the parables are beautifully pointed and instructive; and the epistles of St. Paul are a model of the sublimest and most energetic eloquence, that can be found in any age, or in any language.

When the immortal Locke and Newton had dived into every *other* kind of knowledge, they sat down to contemplate the vanity and poverty of all, in the richness of the scriptures. The famous Bacon, an oracle

of learning, in his day, and the wonder of all succeeding ages, confessed them to be the source of all *real wisdom*. The illustrious Selden, on his death-bed, assured archbishop Usher, that the *whole* of his immense library could not give him half the comfort, which he derived from one *single* sentence of the inspired writings; and Addison, whose name must be ever dear to every friend of religion and virtue, spent no little time in collecting together, and arranging into one common point of view, the united evidences of the christian religion.

The primitive christians used to read this book, on their knees. Their preface was, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of thy law." Imitate them on earth, and in *time* you shall join that illustrious choir of saints, that are continually worshipping before the throne in heaven.

LETTER IX.

THE old Scriptures may appear, in themselves, dry and insipid; but when you consider them, as *typical* of the new, and affording a strong, collateral testimony to the truth of revelation; as the describing circumstances, manners, and anecdotes of a peculiar, chosen people, whose history, rebellion, captivity and dispersion are interwoven with the whole system of christianity, you will read them with a greater relish, and more godly edification.

Jesus Christ is the foundation of the apostles and prophets; all the incidents you read, point to him, as their origin, and as their end; "the great corner stone in Zion; the lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

The bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt, is an image of *our* captivity to sin and their deliverance, of our redemption through the blood of Christ ; their journeying through the wilderness, is a strong picture of our wearisome passage through this vale of tears. Moses is the Saviour, making waters of comfort gush from the stony rock ; the manna is the food of his word, and the waters are the graces of his holy spirit ; the beautiful and affecting history of Joseph is an emblem of that better personage, who was envied, hated, persecuted and murdered by his brethren, for the general salvation : Abraham is a striking image of the Almighty, offering up his only son, and all the *ceremonies* of the law point to that true *blood* of sprinkling, which alone can take away the sins of the world. Thus is *every* page holy ; thus do you tread, every moment, on consecrated ground, and thus every word, when *properly* understood, is spirit and is life.

But of *all* the scriptures, the gospels are certainly the most edifying and instructive. They are plain, forcible, spiritual ; they come from the very mouth of holiness and wisdom, and do not admit of any wrong constructions or doubtful interpretations. If there was only the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel extant, we should have an incomparable abridgement of christianity, sufficient to direct our faith, to animate our practice, and flash confusion on that host of writers, who have built so many strong and dangerous opinions on the pretended basis of revelation.

Commentators may serve to explain an eastern custom, ceremony, allusion or mode of expression, but I cannot in general, recommend them, at least to young people. They embarrass more frequently, than they direct ; they have often perplexed, what, in itself, was clear, and darkened, where they affected to illuminate. The sayings of our Lord are so very obvious, as to need

little or no explanation. They are a precious wine, which the profane wisdom of scholars and philosophers has mixed with water. If men had only studied them with earnestness, instead of their own interests, prejudices and passions, we should never have been distracted with so many systems of error and superstition.

Do not read much, at a time. Meditation is the stomach, which digests this food; you should *reflect* many hours, for reading *one*. And there is such a condensed richness in the scriptures, that one single verse will often suggest an ample fund for serious contemplation.

Every moment, that you peruse this book, consider yourself as in the immediate presence of your Maker. Fancy that you heard him, delivering the commandments, in all the thunder and lightning of the mount. Remember that, though heaven and earth fail, one jot or one tittle shall, in no wise, pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Consider what a number of holy men have sealed the truth of this testimony with their blood. Examine yourself by the promises and threatnings, as you go along, and do not forget to bless God, upon your knees, that he has given you such a lamp for your feet, and such a light to your paths.

Without this sacred volume, the world would have been at this very moment, considerably unenlightened; worshipping stocks or stones, perhaps offering human blood, and tormenting themselves with burdensome ceremonies, that had no manner of connection with the heart; immersed in sorrows, which they could not have eased, and perplexed with a thousand, gloomy enigmas, which they never could have solved. The light, which superficial sceptics vaunt, as that of *nature* or philosophy, or, in a great degree, derived from the scriptures. The arguments, which they level against christianity, have been suggested by the light of christianity itself.

LETTER X.

THOUGH I have reprobated *prolix* commentators, there are, however, several little books, which will illustrate and enliven the sacred writings, and enable you to read them with greater pleasure and advantage. Melmoth, on the beautiful and sublime of scripture, falls under this description. He will suggest some striking passages, which before may have escaped your observation.

The Comtesse le Genlis is intitled to the gratitude of all young people. She is possessed of an elegant taste, a splendid style, and a very enlightened understanding. She has thrown into a dramatic form, several of the historical parts of the Bible; and though the chastity of an English taste is not easily reconciled to seriousness "in so questionable a shape," her ingenuity sparkles through the whole performance, and has given it a pathos, an *interest* and a brilliancy, that will both improve your heart, and delight your imagination.

I scarcely know a woman, that deserves so much from the community at large, as Mrs. Trimmer. Her sacred history is a well known, useful performance: her unwearied labours for the service of the poor, in her *Family Magazine*, and her active patronage of Sunday Schools, bespeak an heart, that is warm with benevolence, and an understanding of no *ordinary* size. The pride of philosophy and profound learning may, perhaps look *down* on such attempts, as beneath their ambition. But how can talents be so usefully, or so amiably employed, as when stripped of their gaudy plumage, they condescend to instruct, to bless and reform the meanest of mankind. *Metaphysical* reasonings are for the *learned few*, and often mislead them; these *practical* labours consult the good of *millions*, and will continue to edify, when all such cobwebs systems

are totally demolished, and their authors consigned to the oblivion, they deserve.

There is not, perhaps, a better method of turning scripture to advantage, than that used by the good bishop Wilson, in his *Sacra Privata*. He selects a few, detached verses, and, in his natural and easy style, raises upon *each*, a train of reflections, which must inkindle and animate the devotion of every reader.

Doddridges paraphrase on the new testament may be justly recommended for its zeal, piety, earnestness and animation. Nor does it want the embellishments of a lively fancy, or of an easy and unadorned language. But, like most dissenters of his time, he was a pupil of the Calvinistic school ; and though I shall never be a convert to his system, I cannot but approve the *general* air and spirit of his writings. There are few things or characters in life, any more than authors that are formed to command an unreserved admiration. The most delightful landscape has its shades. The most animated countenance has frequently *some* feature imperfect, or distorted. There will be *accidental* heats and flushes on the most delicate complexion.

LETTER XI.

THERE are several, excellent manuals of private devotion. But I have no great opinion of these forms. Look into the history of your private life and the dispensations of Providence ; to what is daily happening within you, and about you, and your own *heart* will be the best prayer book in the world. If you attend to its wishes, its breathings and its wants, you can never want *language* ; or if you *should*, God is ever present and will accept the naked wishes of your soul. A *beggar*, in great distress, is always eloquent.

His *sighs and tears* speak ; he *feels* what he wants, and he needs no artificial arrangement of words. Still *babes* must be nourished with milk. There is a period in the *christian*, as well as the *natural*, life, when leading strings are necessary to the infant.

I have known people fall into a total *disuse* of private devotion, solely from a fancied poverty of words. This is a very dangerous error. Prayers, drawn from books, are surely preferable to no prayers at all. *Artificial* exercise is better than total inaction. But prayer of the heart is that superior glow, which arises from motion in the open air, and exhalirates us with a view of all the charming pictures and productions of nature.

As a public system of devotion, that of our church is excellent. How simple and energetic is the language ! How rich and beautifully *varied*, are the collects ! How unconfined and universal the prayers, extending to all conditions of men, situations of life, and comprising every wish and sorrow of the heart. If other forms do not please your taste, you may contrive to adapt some portion of this to your private occasions.

Two *capital* traits will strike you in our liturgy ; the great stress, laid upon *Jesus Christ*, and the continual intercession for the blessings of the *holy spirit*. These are, indeed, the grand lesson to be learned from it, as well as from the scriptures. They are the *pillars* of the church ; the *life* and *blood* of the christian system.

Without the atonement of *Christ*, criminals as we are, there never could have been any hope of mercy ; without the assistance and graces of the spirit, we could not have been purified for the mansions of glory. If *Christ* has been called the sun of righteousness, the holy spirit is the air, which purifies and invigorates the whole moral world, and preserves it from stagnation and putrefaction.

Meditate frequently on these sufferings of Christ, till you abhor every sin, that produced them ; and in order to be enriched with all graces and blessings, pray daily and fervently for this holy spirit. The good Bishop Kenn has a few words, in one of his hymns, which wonderfully epitomize our petitions and our wants :

Direct, control, suggest this day,
All I design, or do, or say,
That all my pow'rs, with all their might,
In thy sole glory may unite.

LETTER XII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

YOUR sacred reading needs not to be wholly confined to the scriptures. A few, other serious books will assist your piety, as well as serve to *illustrate* and confirm the scriptures themselves.

I cannot, in this respect, so much recommend *modern* sermons, as some little practical treatises of piety. English discourses in general, by a strange, scholastic mismanagement, are not sufficiently addressed to the *heart*. Either they are learned disquisitions, on some *speculative*, controverted subject, more calculated to display abilities, than to edify ; or they are spruce, moral essays with little more of *christianity* in them, than might be gleaned from the works of Plato or Epictetus. They want that simplicity, fire, energy, animation, that boldness of images, appeal to the conscience, and that picturesque display of heaven and hell, which give such an unction to the writings of St. Paul, and of the fathers. They do not thunder and lighten at the sinner ; they do not carry us by a whirlwind,

into heaven, and shew us thrones and sceptres ; they convince, but they do not animate ; they *glitter*, but they do not *warm*.

Ancient divines have more fire and matter. They studied the scriptures, more than *human* systems. " They were filled with the spirit ;" they were men of watchfulness and prayers. A profane spirit of criticism or of philosophy, falsely so called, makes *us* cold and languid. In pervading many learned or splendid pages, the heart is often left devoid of one, pious emotion.

Many sermons, no doubt, are to be excepted from this censure. Those of Archbishop Secker contain a fund of solid matter, piety and instruction ; but the *style* is rather singular and uncouth. The marble is rich, but it is unpolished. There is such a thing, as an elegant simplicity. Secker had a simplicity without this elegance.

Few prelates, however, have deserved so well from the church, or posterity. The metropolitan, though placed in the bosom of a court, had neither pride, indolence, nor adulation. His vigilance was extraordinary ; his labors unremitting, and his crossier but an imperfect emblem of the real pastoral zeal, " which eat " up his soul." The present bishop of London has all the simplicity of his illustrious patron, tissued with that elegance, which the archbishop wanted. His sermons have been *universally* read ; they are written on a truly evangelical plan ; and their object is not merely to *amuse*, but to instruct and edify.

LETTER XIII.

EVERY person should read the discourses of Sherlock, who wishes to see the grand doctrines of

christianity properly illustrated, and enforced with equal energy of argument and language. Sherlock is one of the few, *original* writers of sermons. He is the Locke of divinity, who anatomizes the whole system, and displays its component parts.

Many authors glean all their matter from other books. He borrowed *his* from the scriptures and reflexion. He *thought* many hours, for *writing one*. If all men did the same, the press would not groan with such continual *abortions*.

Ogden's Sermons have very great, original merit. Perhaps I *miscalled* them ; they are, more properly, sketches on sacred subjects ; on the fundamental articles of the christian faith. There is more vigour, and energy and conviction in one page of this writer, than in whole volumes of some others, who have received a much more general applause.

The doctor seems particularly to have studied conciseness, and his *miniature* plan sometimes leaves the features of his pieces indistinct. There is a singular abruptness in his transitions, and the mind is frequently obliged to pause, in order to discover the *invisible* connexion, and unite the, seemingly, broken chain of ideas. These discourses were, probably, in their *original* state, much more *diffuse*. He retrenched by degrees, and, as an ingenious, French writer once said, " had leisure to be concise."

LETTER XIV.

THERE is more popular eloquence, argument and pathos in Archbishop Tillotson, than in almost any ancient writer of sermons, that I recollect. But his works are much incumbered with the scholastic divinity of his age, and strangely perplexed with

divisions and subdivisions. *Unity* of design is the beauty of all writings. A religious discourse should tend only to the enforcing of one *grand point*. This should, always, be kept in sight, and the way to it should be as direct, concise and simple, as possible. Divines of the last century spent more time in proving what was *self-evident*, and illustrating it by learned quotations, than would have sufficed for inculcating some lesson of piety, that would never have been forgotten. Modern writers have judiciously corrected this mistake. They come more *immediately* to the point, and would think it as downright pedantry to amuse their hearers with a long list of writers, as to retail little scraps of Greek or Latin in conversation.

Atterbury was the pulpit Cicero of his day, and, for the beauty, sweetness and harmony of his style, has *still* an admirer in every person of elegance and taste. But to me he has always appeared rather graceful, than forcible, and more splendid, than impassioned. He is always dressed for court; and *studied* ornaments, however rich, cannot but have an uninteresting *uniformity*. He is invariably a fine, flowing, pellucid stream, never that impetuous torrent, which overflows its banks, carries all before it, and gives us the idea of sublimity and grandeur. Nature would have tired, if she had presented us with nothing but fine, level extended *lawns*. She has wisely intermixed wild heaths, barren rocks, and craggy precipices in her infinitely beautiful and variegated landscapes.

LETTER XV.

THE late, unfortunate Dr. Dodd owed, I should conceive, his great popularity to the advantage

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of his voice, person, manner, gesture and address. For indeed his compositions have not intrinsic merit enough to have challenged any extraordinary applause.

Weak, flimsy, superficial in his arguments, and rather plausible, than energetic in his language, it must have been only the *popularity* of his subjects, the new vein of *pathetic*, which he attempted, and his fortunate congenial situation at the Magdalen, and in a metropolis, which, under the management of such advantages, procured him his extensive, *temporary* reputation.

But alas ! his popularity was very dearly purchased ! It was built on the ruins of his innocence and virtue. Happy, if he had lived and died in obscurity, or been an humble curate in some sequestered village, where jessamines had clasped round his unenvied mansion, with unenlightened rustics only for his associates ! Admiration would not then have dazzled his eyes. His vanity could not have sought those *unequal* connexions, which he afterwards found himself unable to support, nor expensive pleasures led him to an action, which wounded religion in its very vitals, and brought so much disgrace on his sacred profession.

He might, then, like many other excellent men, have “fallen asleep,” amidst the tender offices of bewailing friends ; and grateful villagers, would have wetted his monument with tears of heart-felt gratitude and esteem. He is now a beacon, rising high in the bosom of the ocean, which says to the wary mariner, “beware of rocks and quicksands.” It has been said, that Dodd, in the beginning of his sacred office, was remarkably pious. What is the conclusion ? Hear it from compassion. Bathed in tears, she lifts up her voice, and cries aloud, “Let him who thinketh he “standeth, take heed lest he fall.”

Faringdon’s Sermons have very singular merit. It is but seldom that so much vivacity finds its way into this species of writing. They will improve your heart ;

they will please your taste, and inchant your imagination. It is many years since I read them ; but the impression they made upon my mind, will never be erased.

If I durst invidiously, amidst their many excellencies, mention a defect, it is, that they are not sufficiently full of *scriptural* allusions. It is amazing what force and energy the *judicious* introduction of scriptural passages, authorities and images gives to discourses of this nature. The rest may be the ingenious conjectures of the author. *These* strike the reader with all the certainty and irresistible evidence of mathematical demonstration.

Though genius and taste may be permitted to *embellish*, the sacred writings should be the *groundwork* of all pulpit productions. They should check our flights into the regions of fancy, and they should guide us through the bewildering mazes of metaphysics.

Faringdon is long since dead, but the *real** author of these Discourses is yet alive. I have long had the honor of knowing him, and as long have admired his talents. And of his virtues and great benevolence, he exhibited, I think, no ordinary proof, when, to serve the family of a deceased brother clergyman, he gave his time, his labor, his abilities, and (what is more,) denied himself the dazzling prospect of *reputation*.

LETTER XVI.

YOUNG people are in raptures with (what they *choose* to call) Sterne's Sermons. But true criticism will not give them so dignified a name. They are the sacred stories of scripture embellished with his

* Rev. Mr. O———n, Rector of W———n.

original talent at the descriptive and pathetic. They are his *sentimental* journey to Zion ; but have little more of true *divinity* in them, than they might have had, if such an heavenly personage as Jesus Christ, had never lived in the world, nor published his gospel.

Sermons, that aim only to *amuse* or *entertain*, are beneath the pulpit. They are the moral *beauism* of divines ; an attempt to mix all the colours of the rainbow, with the dark solemnity of a most serious garb. They are music playing in the ears of a man, whose house is on fire, and can only *beguile* the moment, which should be spent in saving all the valuables of his furniture, and escaping for his life. Discourses of this nature should alarm the conscience ; should display at once our misery and the mode of cure ; should probe all the rankling sores of the heart, and pour in the precious oil of divine consolation.

Sterne was a very great, eccentric, original genius, but he was never formed for a clergyman. He had a levity of mind, that ill befitted so serious a character. What painter, in fancying an altar-piece, would have grouped a *beau d'esprit*, or a facetious *bon vivant*, with our Saviour and his apostles at the last supper ?

LETTER XVII.

THE Christian Pattern will abundantly recommend itself by the name. The translation of it by Stanhope, is too diffuse. Wesley has, more faithfully, preserved the spirit and concise energy of the excellent original.

The singular merit of this little book is obvious from its translation into almost all languages. Ganganelli ascribes it, with pride, to an *Italian* author. But, whatever country gave it birth, it is filled with a sacred

unction, and "the wisdom which cometh from above." Read a chapter of it every day, and you will never want a fund of christian meditations.

There is more true piety and information, couched in reflexions on the seven Days of the Week, by Mrs. Talbot, than you will sometimes meet with in large and splendid volumes. You cannot have a better train of reflexions for the beginning of your every day. This good lady lived in the family of Archbishop Secker, and seems to have imbibed that spirit of piety, which so eminently distinguished this illustrious prelate. She is long since dead ; but her little book will live in the hearts of the pious, when time has tarnished all the lustre of more sounding names.

I have always thought, that little, short treatises of this kind have done the most extensive good. We can carry them about us, and the size does not deter us from looking *within*. People will not read *large* treatises of religion, and writers, in this respect, should accommodate themselves to the weakness of mankind. Tender stomachs cannot digest rich, substantial food, nor much, at a time.

Addison's Saturday's papers are all of them inimitable. They contain a rich fund of knowledge and entertainment, raise the imagination, and improve the heart. The good man very judiciously appointed them for Saturdays. They are the best preparatives for being "truly in the spirit, on the Lord's day."

Scott is not, perhaps, a lively or entertaining writer ; but his Christian Life is a most excellent and *rational* system of divinity. Indeed subjects of this nature do not admit of so much *colouring*, as some others. Imagination may better lend its charms to painters, poets, orators, than to systematic divines. I think, however, that, even on sacred topics, genius might more frequently, embellish, than it *does*. Young people will

have language, pathos and picturesque images, or they will not read. Some little condescension is due to their weakness. Children must be cheated into the taking of useful medicines. The pill should be gilded, and the bitter mixed with a sweet.

LETTER XVIII.

THE immortal Locke analyzed the powers of the human understanding. Mason on Self knowledge is the anatomist of the *heart*. If you would see yourself in your true colours, you must be *daily* conversant with this book. You should take it to your pillow, when you go to sleep. You should read it, when you rise. It has, however, in my idea, one capital defect. It is too much ramified into heads, divisions and subdivisions. The size of the house is too small for the numerous apartments.

Though I am, by no means, partial to the latter, *fanciful* writings of Mr. Law, I will venture to recommend the two, first books he ever produced, his *Serious Call*, and *Christian Perfection*. They are very awakening, animated treatises, written with great simplicity of style, strength of argument, and originality of manner. His *Miranda* is a very amiable character; and, though her piety has something of the *monastic*, in its air, there are traits in the portrait that deserve your emulation.

One cannot recollect the *beginning* of this good man's life, when his conceptions were so clear, and his manner so impassioned, without shuddering at the danger of giving way to fanciful theories, or visionary writers. It is wonderful, that so very discriminating a genius should have been, afterwards, shackled with the spiritual chymistry, and the unintelligible rhapsodies of Beh-

men. But even the great and amiable Fenelon was the disciple of a visionary. He who wrote *Telema- chus*, fell into reveries. "We have this treasure in " earthen vessels, and it *will* be tinged with our particu- " lar complexions."

LETTER XIX.

YOUNG's Night-Thoughts have considerable merit, and may *occasionally*, be read with advantage. But they are much discoloured with melancholy, and give christianity, which is *naturally* cheerful, too dark a complexion.

Born with no slender share of ambition, Young had anxiously and *unsuccessfully* courted promotion. The bubble always burst, as he attempted to grasp it ; the *ignis fatuus* deluded him, as it has done thousands besides. Disappointment is generally followed with disgust, and disgust will always dictate to the pen.

With all that sensibility, which is the inseparable concomitant of genius, the author of the Night-Thoughts had likewise the misfortune to be deprived, by an early death, of several of those relatives, from whose tender offices and soothing attentions, he might naturally have expected, in the evening of a *gloomy* life, to have received *some* consolation. His poems, therefore, have much the strain of elegy, and his piety is breathed in sighs. But his Night-Thoughts have awakened many into seriousness, and you must take them, as you do all *other*, human things, with their good and their bad. The brightest pearl is surrounded with a mud. It is the business of taste and judgment to make the separation.

The works of Wilson (the once bishop of Sodor and Man,) are a treasure of plain, *practical* devotion. His

Indian instructed, his *Parochialia*, his *Sacra Privata*, and his treatise on the Sacrament, are all serious and interesting.

This good prelate has not displayed much genius or learning. But his writings are useful, in proportion to their plainness, and will edify thousands, who could never have comprehended the depths of learning, or the subtilties of metaphysics.

Thrown into an ignorant and *superstitious* diocese, he stooped to the level of the meanest understanding. He considered himself as the father of his people, and they paid him a filial duty and respect. The islander *still* visits his grave, and weeps at the recollection of his deceased virtues. Such bishops will live in the memory of the faithful, when splendor is forgotten. His labours were unremitting, his zeal, primitive ; and if he gave no *brilliance* to the mitre, he added to its *solid* weight.

LETTER XX.

THE meditations of St. Austin are admirable, but have suffered not a little from the translation. It is, I still repeat it, in these *old* books, that we chiefly find the true spirit of piety. Has it evaporated, like some *mineral* waters, by a long preservation ? Or is it that we would be men of philosophy and criticism, rather than divines ? A *modern* theologian plays about the *head*, but scarcely warms the *heart* ; an *ancient* writer carries us, by an irresistible impulse, into heaven, and fills us with all the raptures of devotion.

The difference will be very forcibly illustrated by the different construction of ancient and modern churches. The wide magnificence, the luminous darkness, the mouldering walls and long drawn aisle

of gothic structures inspire us with a pleasing melancholy, thoughtfulness and devotion ; whilst the glaring light, artificial ornaments, primness and convenience of our *modern* synagogues fill us only with little, *worldly* ideas of elegance and taste.

Beveridge's private thoughts and resolutions richly deserve a place in your collection. They are not animated or elegant, but they are pious and useful. He is one of those hospitable friends, that gives us a very comfortable and rich repast without ceremony or ostentation.

Taylor is the Shakespeare of divinity. The fertility of his invention, the force of his arguments, the richness of his images and the copiousness of his style are not often to be paralleled in the works of ancient or modern writers. His holy living and dying is a *chef d'œuvre*.

I do not remember to have received more pleasure and improvement from any book, that I have read for some time past, than from the two first volumes of Ganganeli's Letters. Besides being surprized to see such a generous mode of thinking in the sovereign pontiff, so much vivacity in a *monk*, tempered with so great a share of unaffected piety, I was quite charmed with the simplicity of his style, the beauty of his metaphors, and that spirit of philanthropy, which pervades the whole, and does, all along, more honor to his heart, than his easy periods, to his understanding.

There is something in the climate of Italy, which wonderfully heats and sublimates the imagination. It is the garden of Europe, and its writers breathe that agreeable perfume with which it is scented. Ganganeli's description of this country is particularly splendid. His statues breathe. His torrents absolutely murmur on the ear. His cliffs have an impending horror on the fancy, and his gardens waft upon us aromatic smells. I would still gladly hope, notwithstanding all

that has been advanced to the contrary, that these letters really came from this distinguished person. I am not willing to give up the idea, that liberality of sentiment has extended itself, even to the papal throne.

LETTER XXI.

MY DEAR LUCY,

YOU would observe from the complexion of my last letter, that I have recommended writers of very different sects, and from various denominations of christians. The truth is, I have considered their *spirit* and *tendency*, and not their name or party. I do not want to make you a methodist, a dissenter, a mystic, a papist, a fanatic, an enthusiast, or any thing but a real christian. I should wish to divest your mind of every species of bigotry, and convince you, that real piety *has* existed under *every* communion.

When your judgment is more matured, you should examine authors of all different persuasions, as the Grecian artist did women, when he wished to paint his Venus of Medici. He selected from every one he saw, that *particular* limb or feature, in which they, *separately*, excelled. From one, he borrowed the most beautiful eye; from another, an hand; from a third, a bosom, &c. These, by a wonderful effort of genius, he combined into a perfect whole.

All systems, like all human figures, have their defects; but they have, likewise, their excellencies. Collect these, distinct charms, and work them up in the crucible of your heart, till they produce "the very beauty of holiness" in your life and conversation.

Above all, look through all books and forms and ordinances, up to your God. Cherish, by every meth-

od, a spirit of devotion. Set the Lord always before you. Consider him, as the *soul* of the world, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. Think, act, live, as in his presence, and do every thing to his glory. Begin, continue and end every day, as in his sight, and every action, as under his direction. Remember that all things on earth are but a shadow ; that time is tumbling down the system of the universe, and that *religion only* can rise upon the ruins, by the labors it has inscribed to Eternity and God.

LETTER XXII.

MY DEAR GIRL,

THOUGH it may appear to be dealing with you in dry, abstracted subjects above your age, yet I do think it necessary, that you should understand the grounds, on which your faith is built, or the testimony, which confirms the truth of christianity, and of the scriptures. You will thus be preserved from an uncomfortable fluctuation of opinions, and guarded from the false insinuations of those, that lie in wait to deceive.

I believe, indeed, we very falsely estimate the period, at which the talents of women begin to open, as well as the degree of their extent and comprehension, and superciliously withhold from you, that solid information which, alone in *either* sex, can be the true foundation of a rational, a steady and consistent conduct.

This testimony in favor of revelation, is divided, for the sake of order, into two kinds, *internal* and *external*. The internal is that, which arises from the nature and excellency of the precepts *themselves*, and from the writers having had no *private* or sinister views

to answer, but consulting only the *general* good and edification of mankind.

This *first* mark of authenticity is fixed on every page of the scriptures. The laws of Christ are of such a nature, as no man would have framed, who wished to avail himself of the passions, prejudices and interests of mankind; for they prescribe, on the other hand, an universal humility, mortification and self-denial; exhibit, in the strongest colours, the emptiness of riches, and the vanity of ambition, and have no other view, but to elevate the affections, regenerate the heart, and put all men on looking beyond the transient concerns of this life, to the happiness of another. What else could happen to the original promulgers of these laws, but that, which *actually* did, violence and persecution?

Our blessed Lord positively declared, that his kingdom was not of this world. He sought none of its distinctions, and he received none, unless, by a strange perversion of ideas, we place them in the poverty of a manger, or the tortures of his cross. His *apostles* were inflamed with the very same, *disinterested* zeal. They willingly resigned lucrative employments at the call of their master; they cheerfully abandoned weeping friends; undertook the most hazardous voyages and travels; had no rest day nor night, were carried before kings and governors of the earth, “and even
“hated by all men for his name’s sake.”

Read the account of their labors, persecution, banishment, death; peruse the history of all the martyrs, written with their blood, and tell me, whether their zeal must not have come from *heaven*, or what could ever have inspired it, but a sincere conviction of duty,
“a faith, which looked to a city with foundations,
“whose builder and maker was God.”

LETTER XXIII.

THINK, my dear girl, for yourself. Are there any marks of secular wisdom or policy or imposture, in the conduct of the primitive apostles and christians? Examine the history of the whole world, as it relates to religion, and where *else* will you discover any portion of the same, disinterested spirit, which actuated these original publishers of the gospel?

The Roman Emperor instituted a sacred code to work upon the consciences, and to keep the minds of a savage and a barbarous people in subjection to *government*. Zoroaster, Lycurgus, Solon, all celebrated in their day, and certainly men of extraordinary talents, had more a view to *policy*, than any *moral* interests, in their respective systems of legislation. Mahomet availed himself of the narrow, *sensual* views, and passions of his followers, and of the particular complexion and dissensions of his times, merely to be the sole, exclusive monarch of an extensive empire, and procure a little fading honor and distinction.

“ The kingdom of all *these* men was certainly of “ *this* world,” and their laws, in many instances, were repugnant to right reason, and the best and dearest interests of their fellow creatures. Of Christ, his very *enemies* said, “ never man spake, like this man ;” his injunctions had but *one* aspect—to *universal* happiness, and one, simple method to it—universal *reformation*. The angels that announced him, at his first appearance, proclaimed “ peace on earth, and good-will towards men.”

Nor is the wonderful *progress* of this religion in so *short* a space of time, over all Asia, and a great part of Europe, indeed over almost the *whole* of the, *then*, known world, the least convincing proof of its divine original. Consider the *missionaries*—illiterate fisher-

men and mechanics, and you must conclude, either that they were endowed with *supernatural* gifts and assistance, or that their wonderful *success* was even a greater *miracle*, than the endowment, you dispute.

On this subject permit me to recommend to your serious perusal, Soame Jenyn's Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion. He is on the whole a fanciful writer ; but this is an excellent, little book, that has done much good, and comes with greater force, to every bosom, as he was once, according to his own candid confession, in the number of those, who disputed the sacred truths of revelation. You will receive great pleasure and improvement, likewise from Addison's Evidences of Christianity, arranged and collected into one volume, and from a late similar production of the celebrated Dr. Beattie.

Every *word* of the scriptures, indeed, must convince any candid or thoughtful person, that they come from God. The passions, pride, vices and interests of mankind have induced not a few to set up for sceptics. " Much learning has made them mad," or a little has rendered them *frivolous* and conceited. They have sought only to distinguish themselves by uncommon opinions ; they have been *dupes* to their own *fancied* penetration ; they have attempted to grasp the immensity of the Deity, in arms of *flesh*, or have shrunk into scepticism, as a refuge from their vices.

Hear what the scripture saith, " Every one, that
 " doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the
 " light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. Except
 " ye become as little children, (humble, docile, tractable,) ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.
 " How can ye believe, which receive honor one of
 " another, and seek not the honor, which cometh of
 " God only ?"

LETTER XXIV.

THE *external* testimony, in favour of the christian religion, arises from prophecy, miracles, and the corresponding evidence of history. And these seem to include all the *probable* methods, which heaven could employ for the conversion of mankind.

The whole sacred book of the Old Testament is, from beginning to end, a clear prediction of the Messiah. One of the prophets has foretold the precise year, in which this "righteous branch" should make his appearance. And this event you know, *has* taken place to the comfort of the christian world.

Others have predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, Babylon, Tyre, the dispersion and calamities of the Jews, &c. long before they happened ;—and all profane history, which has been written since their time, will inform you, that these awful judgments were wonderfully accomplished, in their proper season.

The Revelation contains *darker* hints of some events, that are visibly, though *gradually* fulfilling, at this moment. But as I can only *glance* at the subject, you will see it treated in such a manner, as to confirm your faith and exalt your devotion, in the late Bishop of Bristol (Dr. Newton's) discourses on the Prophecies.

The miracles of our Saviour and of his immediate apostles meet you in every page of the inspired book ; and in *profane* history, you will learn from those, who were avowed *enemies* to the cause, that, at a particular period of time, there *did* exist such a sacred personage, as Jesus Christ, who wrought miracles, healed the sick, and raised the dead ; such a sect as that of Christians, who met to receive the sacrament, who bound themselves by *this* oath, to commit no iniquity, practised a wonderful innocence and austerity of manners, and, beyond all example, loved one another. You will see

likewise, in the same pages, a full description of their manners, morals, ceremonies and religious institutions.

The lapse of time, moreover, to us, who live in these *later* times, has given an *additional* force to the evidences, in favour of revelation. The ingenious author of the Spectator, in his day, considered the particular case of the Jews, their calamities, dispersion, vagabond, unsettled state, &c. as a standing and incontestible *miracle*, in support of the sacred writings. They *still* continue (what is there so circumstantially foretold,) unable to incorporate with any people, and loaded with the hatred and abhorrence of all. The testimony, therefore, from *their* history is proportionably more illustrated and confirmed.

The destruction of the Romish church, likewise, is palpably predicted in the scriptures. And, if we may judge from strong appearances, is daily approaching. The great and general diffusion of knowledge; the consequent progress of religious toleration, and that dispersion of the mists of prejudice from all eyes, produced by the genial rays of a meridian sun, must, in time, effect the downfall of all tyranny and superstition: whilst the emperor, employed in destroying monasteries, and encouraging population, appears an instrument in the hand of Providence, for accelerating the approach of this auspicious moment. The late dismemberment, moreover, of territory from the Holy See; the contentions, in which the sovereign pontiff has been involved by those monarchs, who *once* trembled at his frown; and the mere *external* deference only, which is paid to his authority, prove that his throne is tottering from its base, and like all other human things, approaching to its dissolution. Thus is our holy religion founded on a rock, against which the winds and waves of infidelity beat in vain. Proud men may reason, and wicked men pretend to doubt, but “the very gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

LETTER XXV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

WONDER not at the diversity of opinions in religion. It has been from the *beginning*, and will continue to be the case, to the *end*, of the world. Men will never have the same religious sentiments, till you can give them the very same *natural* dispositions of humility, candour, teachableness; the same capacity, education, acquaintance, or even the same set of features or the same complexion.

The history of the church, from the first moment, to the present, is an history of these dissensions. So soon as Christ and his apostles disappeared, men mixed "tares of human opinion with this good seed of the word." Even two of these apostles had a sharp contention, and the spirit has never vanished from their successors.

There has been the same fashion in religious opinions, as in common things. Particular notions have been abetted, laid aside, resumed and dismissed again, under different names and leaders, exactly like the varying modes of dress, furniture or entertainments.

Nor is this the least impeachment of our holy religion. The truth of that, like the God, whence it comes, is the "same yesterday, to-day and forever." It is reserved, as the privilege of a more glorious era, that all men shall be of one "heart and of one soul" and keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."

In all *human* systems of faith, there must be error. Where error is *involuntary*, and springs from no *criminal* passions, but only from a weakness or *misdirection* of judgment, the Almighty, who looketh chiefly at the heart, doubtless will forgive. Charity, in the mean time, is the great bond of union, amongst all parties.

“ They shall come from the east, and from the west, “ and sit down in the kingdom of God.” If we hope to be companions in glory, we “ should not surely fall “ out by the way.”

The christian blood, which has stained so many ages of the church, has flowed from the most *malignant* and selfish passions. The gospel breathes nothing but universal love, and candour and forbearance. “ Ye “ know not what manner of spirit ye are of,” is the mild rebuke to every persecutor, that would slay with the sword.

LETTER XXVI.

THOUGH it is really *invidious*, yet for the sake of directing your judgment, and gratifying a very natural and laudable curiosity, I will give you a brief, comprehensive sketch of the opinions of the more celebrated, religious sects, that have prevailed in this kingdom. You will thus be able to form some comparative idea of their merits or defects; you will not be so likely to be “ tossed about with every blast of vain “ doctrine,” and you will never feel yourself at a loss, in company, when they become the subject of conversation.

Pagans are those who are wholly unenlightened with revelation, and worship *idols*, instead of the true God. These idols have been various, as the caprices or imaginations of the people amongst whom they are found; sometimes fictitious beings, such as Jupiter, Apollo, Mercury, Mars, Juno, Venus, Minerva, &c. sometimes, good qualities personified; Faith, Hope, Victory, Concord; sometimes animals, as Serpents, Crocodiles, &c. or even vegetables; as Leek, Onion, Garlic. These last were objects of adoration amongst the Egyptians.

Before the appearance of Christ, almost the whole world was covered with paganism. All the learning and politeness of Athens and of Rome could not dispel this ignorance. It has only vanished "where the sun of righteousness has appeared with healing in his wings."

An ingenious writer has said, that, if we divide the known countries of the globe into thirty equal parts, five will be Christians; six, Mahometans, and *nineteen* Pagans. How dreadful the reflection, that the greatest of all possible blessings should have penetrated but so small a way! When we consider the privileges of the gospel, how gladly would one carry it, if it were possible, into every country of the known world! How ardently should we pray to our father in heaven, that his kingdom of grace may daily come on earth, and how thankful should we be to that gracious Providence, that has fixed *our* lot in a christian land, and under the enlivening beams of revelation!

LETTER XXVII.

MY DEAR GIRL,

MAHOMETANS are so called from being followers of the great impostor, Mahomet. This extraordinary man was born at Mecca, in Arabia, about the middle of the sixth century; and, in his fortieth year, after some time previously spent in the silence, retirement and austerities of a cave, presumed to stile himself, *the Apostle of God*; pretended to have received from heaven, a new and a *last* revelation, which was to illustrate and inforce, what had been mistaken or perverted, in the *christian*, by the lapse of time or the sophistry of men. He affected, likewise,

a commission from above, if *gentler* methods should prove *ineffectual*, to propagate his particular religion by the sword.

His tenets are contained in the Koran, which, for its singularity, is worth your reading. To give them *plausibility*, they are interspersed with some christian doctrines, but, at the same time, carry a most artful *address* to the passions ; allowing polygamy, and describing the future paradise, as consisting *principally*, of *sensual* pleasures ; splendid, silken garments ; rivers of water, wine, milk, honey ; music, feasting and most beautiful women.

Mahomet was a man of great talents and ambition. He had no view but to render himself the sole and formidable monarch of an extensive empire. *Religion* was made the *instrument* for executing his wicked and tyrannical designs. Hence all his austerities, disguises, deceptions. Hence he pretended such a familiar intercourse with heaven, and by his singular address, founded a religion, which has continued since his time, with *little variation*, to overspread a considerable part of the world. It is professed by the Turks and Persians, by several nations amongst the Africans, and by many amongst the East-Indians.

The *outline* of it was sketched by the hands of a great master. It was suited to the climate ; it took advantage of the disorders and dissensions, *then* prevailing amongst Christians, and it promised a species of gratifications, to which our nature will *always* feel the strongest propensity.

The *bulk* of people, in any country, *do* not, indeed *cannot*, think or judge for themselves ; it will therefore, always be in the power of those, who have any *popular* talents to make the multitude, their proselytes and *slaves* ; and thus, if we turn over the history of the world, shall we find the ambition, lust, and avarice of a *few*, trampling on the dearest interests of the *many*.

LETTER XXVIII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

UNDER the name of Christians, however differing from each other in *private* opinions, or divided and subdivided amongst themselves, are included all those, who embrace the sacred revelation and doctrines of *Jesus Christ*. Amongst these, the Roman Catholics, both in point of numbers, and the figure they have made in the history of Europe may seem to claim some degree of precedence.*

This religion, which has subsisted for such a length of time, and covered so considerable a part of the world, is little else but a system of *political tyranny* established by the clergy, over the *consciences* and *fortunes* of men, merely to enrich and aggrandize *themselves*. They who should have aspired to no other greatness, but to become the servants of all for their eternal good, have undertaken “to lord it over God’s “heritage, and rule it with a rod of iron.”

Can any thing in the world be more inconsistent? The Pope in all the plenitude of *temporal* power, presumptuously stiles himself the *vicar general* of Jesus Christ! that Jesus, who appeared in a *manger*, emptied himself of all his glory, and disclaimed all *temporal* greatness and distinction!

The public worship of the papists is overladen with *ceremony*. It is performed in a *learned* language, unknown to the vulgar, and intermixed with such a continual change of dress, attitude and ceremonies, as are only calculated to excite the *ridicule* of a rational and

* The Roman Catholic religion is at this day the established religion of the following Countries, viz. Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, and likewise part of Germany and Switzerland.

enlightened mind. The great, Supreme incomprehensible Spirit is only to be served with the *heart* and affections, and the most unlearned person in a congregation should surely understand every prayer, that is uttered.

The Roman Catholics acknowledge the Pope for their head. They think the church infallible in its councils and decisions, and brand all, who differ from them, with the odious name of *heretics*, as people, who are not within the pale of salvation. They keep the minds of poor people in *ignorance*; they do not permit them to read the scriptures, but refer them for instruction solely to their *priests*; they maintain the necessity of confessing their sins and frailties to their pastor, and the validity of *human* absolution; they believe the absurd and incomprehensible doctrine of *transubstantiation*, or that the elements of bread and wine, in the sacrament, are changed into the *real* body and blood of Christ; they have been accused of worshipping images; saints, they certainly invoke, to be mediators for them; they have swelled the number of sacraments to *seven*; these are baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and marriage; they admit the doctrine of a purgatory after death, in which souls are refined from their former pollutions; they forbid their priests to *marry*, preach up the necessity, of *superior sanctity* of a single life, and induce as many people of fortune, as possible, to bury themselves in convents and monasteries, and pour their fortunes into the bosom of the church; in some of the more *corrupt* ages, indulgencies for the *greatest* crimes might be purchased with *money*,* and every degree of guilt has had

* The selling of these indulgencies by John Tezel, a Dominican friar, roused the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther, professor of Divinity in the University of Wittenberg, in the electorate of Saxony. He caused 95 theses, opposing this

its stated sum of acquittance ; persecution for conscience sake, has been deemed meritorious, and their annals are stained with the *blood* of thousands.

There are, doubtless, multitudes of papists, who, in an enlightened age, *shudder* at many of these dreadful opinions, and *laugh* at others ; the gay and volatile people of France, *in general* ridicule them *all* ; and make a *natural* transition from the extreme of superstition to that of unbelief. Whether these be, or be not, the principles of the *present members*, they are indisputably, the established doctrines of the church, however varnished over by art, or evaded by affectation ; and though this people at present, are loyal, inoffensive subjects, and seemingly attached to the sovereign on the throne, yet there is reason to fear, that a renewal of their power would be attended with a repetition of their violence, and blow up the seemingly extinguished embers of hatred and persecution. Such a many-headed monster should be carefully guarded. Deluges of *human* blood are not to be forgotten.

For *their* sake, and for the honor of Christianity, I do most ardently wish their conversion. I long to embrace, as brethren, a thousand excellent men, who *now* live, as I cherish the memories of many, who have *died*, within their communion. Nor do I think the period is very *distant*. Bigotry cannot much longer be a weed in the present highly cultivated state of Great-Britain. I have before mentioned the emperor, as a *probable* instrument of this good work. His ambition, I trust, will thus be consecrated to the glory of God, and the welfare of mankind. The happiest events we celebrate, have sometimes, sprung from the impurest passions. Our own reformation from this

abuse and other errors, to be printed and nailed to the door of the Electoral Church, October 31, 1517 ; and this was the beginning of the Reformation.

church was *singularly* effected.* The Almighty can bend the counsels of men, in such a manner, as to answer his sovereign designs. “ He doeth what he will, “ in the armies of heaven, and amongst all the inhabitants of the earth.”

LETTER XXIX.

THE *Greek* church is much less known amongst us, as to its doctrine or discipline, than the Roman. Indeed there are, comparatively, but few members of it in England. It was first established in Greece, from whence it derived its name, and extends to some other parts of Turkey.† It is often called the *eastern*, in contradistinction to the Romish, which is the *western*, church.

Though the professors of this religion disavow the supremacy of the Pope, and many other opinions of the Holy See, yet they are considerably tinged with superstition. Their worship is overladen with ceremony, shew, splendid dresses, fastings, austerities, &c. as well as the former. They are governed by bishops and patriarchs. Their head is the patriarch of Constantinople.

LETTER XXX.

MY DEAR LUCY,

DISSENTER is a *vague* word, which, in its full latitude, may be applied to *all*, who differ from

* In the reign of Henry VIII.

† It is likewise the established Church throughout the vast empire of Russia in Europe.

the established religion. *Originally*, however, it meant only one kind of people, *then* distinguished by the name of presbyterians, who rather dissented from the *discipline* and *polity*, than the *opinions*, of the church. These, in general, embraced the *sentiments* of Calvin, relating to foreknowledge, divine decrees, irresistible grace, predestination, reprobation, &c. They disclaimed episcopacy, and their government was vested in presbyters and synods. The word *presbyter*, means an elder, and *synod*, an ecclesiastical council or assembly.

The *present* race of dissenters may be strictly subdivided into two classes; those who still retain the doctrines of Calvin, and his mode of discipline, and call themselves, from their form of government, *Independants*; and such as assume the more specious title of protestant dissenters. The first are extremely rigid and puritanical in their outward deportment; but they do not breathe all the *sweetness* of piety, nor are their annals unstained with instances of intolerance and persecution.—Their *leader* was a furious and unrelenting bigot. His murder of the poor honest Servetus will be an eternal stigma on his memory, and throw a dark shade over his pretended virtues.

Indeed how can people, with *such* sentiments, act otherwise? If *their* God be only merciful to a *few*, elect, how should *they* think of a *general* benevolence? If *he* can be cruel to so many *millions* of creatures, where is the harm of imitating *his* example, or *exterminating thousands*?

I do not know that the latter kind of dissenters have any *settled* code of faith. “Every minister has a psalm of his own, has a doctrine, has an interpretation,” so that very *opposite* sentiments may be consistently delivered by different persons, in the same pulpit. They value themselves highly, with whatever justice, on their learning, candour and liberality. Far from be-

ing actuated with any blind or *enthusiastic* zeal, they seem to *worship* reason, as their guide, and sacrilegiously exalt it, almost on the *ruins* of revelation. *Their* danger is of falling into scepticism, the most alarming and *incurable* of all spiritual disorders. They are said, in general, to disbelieve the doctrine of the Trinity, of the atonement, and divinity of Christ, and unite with the Calvinists, in *one* sentiment, at least—that of abhorring episcopacy, and of considering the established church, as a system, raised by *priestcraft*, and supported by *superstition*.

LETTER XXXI.

THE methodists are *comparatively* a new sect, and sprung up about sixty years ago, under the auspices of John Wesley, and George Whitfield then students at Oxford. They received their name, from affecting to live by a stricter regimen and *method*, than other people.

They have been long divided into two classes according to the different principles, espoused by their leaders. The first follow the opinions of Arminius, under the guidance of Wesley, who is *still* a very venerable looking patriarch, at their head ; and the other, believing divine decrees, foreknowledge, reprobation and election, are more strictly members of the kirk, (only that they do not admit its discipline) having long since lost their *original* director.*

I do not know, that the methodists, (particularly they, who follow Wesley,) are dissenters from the es-

* George Whitfield. Both before and since his death, the Countess of Huntingdon has been a person of great influence among this latter class of Methodists.

tablishment, further than in having separate meetings to inkindle and inspirit the zeal of their followers: a circumstance, which they conceive to be much neglected by the *regular* clergy. They are baptized with *us*; attend our services and sacrament; admire our liturgy; and only blame us for our lukewarmness and want of energy and animation. This censure, it is true, comes but with a very ill grace from such a people; but, I fear, we cannot easily refute it.

They had *originally* a great share of *enthusiasm*.—But it is greatly softened by the indulgence they have received, and mellowed down by time. They are no longer a new; they are no longer a *persecuted* sect.

The journals of Wesley, written in the infancy of his career, are a strange medley of goodness and enthusiasm. The old man has lived long enough to have seen his error. That glow of imagination is considerably abated, which mistook shadows for substance, and made fiction pass for truth.

The great error amongst this people, is their employing such low, illiterate men as their instructors, and fancying them under the *immediate* guidance of divine inspiration—preaching up the necessity of *instantaneous* conversion and justification by a sort of *miracle*—making faith to consist in a *full assurance* of salvation, and denouncing damnation against those, who have it not in this super-eminent degree—and lastly, in supposing this assurance to depend on certain, *inward extraordinary* impulses, rather than the scriptures.

These sentiments lead many *artful* people into a wicked pretence of feelings and assurances, which they *have not*; others of *warm imaginations* to the belief of what is only chimerical, and plunge still more of honest, timid minds or an hypochondriacal temperament into melancholy and despair.

The Saviour, doubtless, can forgive sins to *whom*, and at *whatever moment*, he pleases. A thief, upon

the cross, was a *miracle* of his mercy ; but this is not the *ordinary* method of his providence ; there are undoubtedly, thousands of excellent people, who pass through the world without such a full *assurance* of faith ; and the spiritual life, like that of animals or vegetables, is *generally* progressive. We grow imperceptibly “ from strength to strength,” and, though the peace of God may be diffused through our consciences, we *dare* not say, “ that we have already attained.”

The methodists were, *once*, extremely lavish in their censures of others ; but justice obliges me to confess, that they are now in general, an harmless, inoffensive and pious people. If they be *gloomy*, it is their *own* misfortune ; if they go mourning all their days, *theirs* is the sorrow ; the world in general, is too dissipated and unreflecting.

As to their leader, he is doubtless a prodigy.—Whatever be the merit or demerit of his opinions, his indefatigable labours, activity, pilgrimages, zeal, and resolution challenge our amazement. An old man of nearly ninety rising constantly at four o'clock in the depth of winter, preaching *frequently*, on the same day, journeying from place to place, “ and from one people to “ another kingdom ;” himself the bishop, secretary, judge, governor of his people, the main spring of such a vast, and *complicated* machine, is a phenomenon, that will vanish from our earthly horizon, when he ceases to exist. His opinions, it is said, do not injure his *cheerfulness*. Time has planted few wrinkles on his forehead, though it has covered his head with snow.

Notwithstanding the religious zeal, which works wonders in his favour, and the deference naturally paid to the *first founder* of a sect, particularly when possessed of any genius or learning, yet his *peaceful* government of so numerous a people, for such a length of time, is a proof of extraordinary talents and address. Whenever he dies, his disciples will dwindle. They

will not easily agree about a successor. No successor can have so undisputed a sovereignty, or possess so unmolested a throne. They will separate from the church ; and the separation will be fatal. It will be the loss of union, consequence and power. The *republic* will probably be divided in its councils, and have less dispatch and energy in the execution.

LETTER XXXII.

THE Baptists or Anabaptists are a species of the independent dissenters, who differ from their brethren, chiefly in the *mode* of administering *baptism*, which *they* conceive, should always be by *immersion*.* There were many of this persuasion, amongst the reformed abroad. In Holland, Germany, and the North, they were called Anabaptists, or Mennonites ; in Piedmont and the South, they were found amongst the Albigenes. In England, they are few, and, at present, little mentioned.

The Quakers arose about the middle of the seventeenth century,† and had their name affixed upon them in *derision*, from the violent *emotions*, with which they affected to be *agitated*, when they conceived themselves under the more immediate impulse of the *spirit*. They explain the whole letter of scripture into a kind of *inward*, and spiritual *allusion*. They never speak, preach or exhort in public, but when they fancy themselves to be moved by *the spirit* ; they set aside the necessity of the *external* sacraments, baptism and the

* They likewise reject the baptism of infants.

† George Fox seems to have been their founder about the year 1649.

Lord's supper, and would certainly be right, if men had no *matter* in their composition, and if the imagination was not to be awakened thro the medium of the *senses*.

They acknowledge no head, but Christ, no master but God ; refuse to pay tithes, and think the common civilities of life *profane* and unchristian. They even appear covered in the presence of their sovereign, and address him with the familiar appellation of thou. They are a religious community within themselves, and their government is wholly *internal*. You may see their principles ably delineated by their ingenious apologist, Barclay. -

There are, however, many excellent traits in the character of the quakers. They are, on the whole, a peaceable inoffensive people ; support their own poor, have manifested, for a long time, from a spirit of humanity, a strong and pointed opposition to the very infamous practice of the slave trade ; they never disturb the peace of the church, or shackle the wheels of government, and are tolerated in all their *innocent* peculiarities by a liberal and an enlightened kingdom.

LETTER XXXIII.

THE Moravians, or the *brethren*, are a species of protestants, who, in the fifteenth century, threw off the despotic yoke of Rome, animated by the zealous exhortations and heroic example of John Mufs.* Count Zinzendorff was a very eminent leader of this sect, and, for his signal services amongst them, has

* John Mufs and Jerom of Prague, suffered martyrdom at Prague, in the year 1414.

been distinguished by the name of Papa* or spiritual father; and a Monsieur la Trobe, who lived in the metropolis, and made continual circuits amongst them, has more lately, acquired great celebrity in their annals.

They have more than once passed through the fiery ordeal of persecution. Their religious principles, however, are sound and orthodox. At a period, when great clamours were raised against them, Potter, the then learned Archbishop of Canterbury, pronounced them a protestant, episcopal community, as they retained no doctrines that were repugnant to the articles of the church of England; and the pious bishop of Sodor and Man (Wilson) was created an honorary president of (what is called) the reformed *Tropus*, in the *Unitas fratrum*, (the unity of the brethren.)

Their discipline and mode of government are very singular. They form within themselves a religious community, independent of every other, and extending to all their brethren throughout the world. They are not suffered to intermarry with people, of a different persuasion; they have groups of religious houses, scattered through the kingdom; they have choirs of single sisters and brethren; the first are occupied in every kind of ingenious needle-work, in which they have made an amazing proficiency, and the latter in all sorts of mechanical employments; and their earnings, after a maintenance for themselves, which they receive in the house, go into one common fund for the support of the general society,† and particularly of the

* This was rather an appellation, which very naturally was used in the familiar circle of his family. In the writings published by the United Brethren, they generally stile him, the ordinary of the Brethren.

† There is no such general fund among the United Brethren. Each member of their community gives, without constraint what he pleases for supporting any of their institutions, or their Missions among the Heathen.

children, belonging to the married brethren and sisters, which are fed, educated and clothed in these religious seminaries.

The morals and chastity of their *women* are guarded with a very peculiar vigilance ; they are not permitted to step without the walls of their asylum, unaccompanied by a superintendent of their own sex :† when any of them, or the brethren is married, it is transacted by the casting of lots, and supposed to be ordained by a *particular* providence, and the union is generally formed with some members of their society *abroad*.‡ They much resemble the methodists in having private conferences, classes, leaders, and examinations concerning the state and progress of grace in the soul, and none are permitted to receive the sacrament, without having previously passed through a very severe process of religious examination.

Their worship consists principally in *singing*, and hence, perhaps, their societies are called choirs. Their residences have much the air of religious houses ; and their single brethren and sisters are often in the mortified state of *involuntary* friars or nuns. Their devotions, like those of a convent, are almost perpetual ;|| and they seem to have forgotten, that they were born for *society*, as well as for themselves.§

† The author's assertion is to be understood only of the growing youth of the sex, who are not of age.

‡ Not generally, but *sometimes* it has been the case as with other inhabitants of these kingdoms.

|| Their stated social devotions are limited to morning and evening prayers, and a weekly exhortation by the Minister.

§ They carry on trades and manufactures like other useful citizens ; and tho' they never urge any member of the different denominations in Christendom to become members of their Church, being averse to proselyte-making ; yet from a full conviction that they were not born for themselves only, they have made uncommon exertions for the Conversion of the Heathen ; for example ; of the Greenlanders,

Such restraints on nature are not tolerable, and nature will, sometimes, assert her rights, and stain their history with indiscretions. We were sent here to be *tried*. Innocence, that subsists only by the *absence* of temptation, scarcely deserves the name; *perpetual* devotion is an *impossibility*; it is as impracticable, as that the eye should be ever looking at the *same* object; and, if I do not much mistake, that piety is most ardent, which knows most of the world, from dear-bought experience, and finding it a scene of mortification and vanity, appeals to *heaven*, for more substantial satisfaction.

There are many scattered societies of Moravians in England, but they appear to be a declining sect. It is *immured* ignorance or prejudice, which has led Christians to separate from each other for little, frivolous distinctions. The era, I hope, is coming which will bring us “more into one common fold, under one “shepherd, Christ Jesus, the Righteous.”

There is certainly a great mixture of *good* in this people. What a pity, that they cannot join with us in offering a rational service, and lifting up one common hallelujah, to the great God and Father of all.

LETTER XXXIV.

I KNOW not why the mystics are so called, unless it be for discovering *mystical* passages in the scripture, or making religion at large wear the appearance of *mystery*. They are a very ancient sect, and sprung up so early, as about the close of the third century.

Eskimos, North American Indians, of the Negroes in the West-Indian islands, of the Negroes, Indians and free Negroes in Surinam, likewise of the natives of the East-Indies and of the Calmucks in Asiatic Russia. See Crans's History of the Brethren, and History of Greenland.

This people, by a very singular kind of ingenuity, discover a spiritual or hidden sense in the most *literal* passages of scripture, and indeed convert the whole, rather into an amusing allegory, than a plain and simple narrative of facts.

They hold all divine truth to come, by an *immediate* influx, from the *spiritual* world, and pretend to a knowledge of God, and heavenly things, that can only be attained in this *extraordinary* manner. Sometimes they are called quietists, because they maintain, that the soul should be in a still, *quiet*, passive state, undistracted with noise and cares, and almost superior to sense or matter, in order to receive this divine illumination.—Their station, in the thermometer of different, religious orders, is that of lighter elements, carried by superior subtilty into the air, whilst others, composed of grosser matter, adhere, by an invincible necessity, to the earth, till death dissolves the union betwixt soul and body.

The mystic theology seems to be the philosophy of *Plato*, refined and grafted upon a Christian stock; the *quixotism* of religion, which affects to attain in *life*, what the scriptures have taught us to expect only after *death*; an intimate knowledge of the Almighty, visions, revelations, almost *intuition*!

If the mystics would reason for a moment, (but people, under the guidance of immediate illumination are far above the *vulgar* shackles of *reason*,) they would see that such a subtle, metaphysical system is poorly fitted for the reception of mankind at large, who can scarcely be brought to understand, relish, or practise the most obvious truths; they would acknowledge *that* divinity to be the best, which does not, with the lightness of some *matter*, ascend into the air, but contents itself on earth, with inculcating and enforcing the most obvious duties of common life; the reciprocal obligations of parents and children, masters and servants,

kings and subjects ; the subjection of the passions, the discipline of reason, and the duty of all to one *common* God. They would know, that their opinions must create an indifference, or a fancied *superiority* to those established ordinances, which are the very basis of all religion, and that if *all* men were governed by their passive *quietude*, there would be none to encounter with the vices and disorders of a mixed, heterogenous state. —Christians would “ cease to be the light of the world, or the salt of the earth ;” there would be none to stem, by powerful, *turbid* eloquence the ragings of iniquity, or let the lustre of their example shine before men.”

Our *Lord's* piety was not of this kind. It sought not the indulgence of recluse contemplation. It was not passive, but active ; every where with the sinner and the saint, to reprove the one, and encourage the other ; in the wilderness to pray, and in the world, to reform ; at a marriage, “ to rejoice with them, that “ did rejoice, and at the grave of Lazarus, to weep “ with his afflicted friends.”

LETTER XXXV.

THE mystic theology boasts some great names. Madame de Guion was a warm espouser of it in France ; a woman of great fashion and consequence, remarkable for the goodness of her heart, and the regularity of her conduct, but of a capricious unsettled temper, and liable to the seductions of a warm imagination.

The opinions of this lady made a great noise in that country, about the year 1687. They were confuted, some time afterwards, by the celebrated Bossuet. The great and good Fenelon undertook her vindication ;

but his book was condemned by Pope Innocent the twelfth.

The Teutonic philosopher (Jacob Behemen,) was a kind of father to this sect, and published a book, which contains a system of the most absurd and incoherent reveries, that perhaps ever gained an admission into the world. It is a species of moral chymistry, and occult philosophy, a bewildering explanation, and a cloudy light, which I will venture to say, that neither Sir Isaac Newton, nor Mr. Looke, with all their clearness of conception, could have been able to understand.

Law, who wrote the Serious Call (a nonjuror of Northamptonshire,) was an abettor of these doctrines; a man of very exemplary life, and discriminating talents; but it was an honour, reserved for the late Baron Swedenborg to carry them to their very height of perfection.† Compared with *his*, all other writings, on the subject, are but the morning contrasted with the perfect day. He tells us *confidently* of his unrestrained communications with the spiritual world, visions, revelations; he gives to every portion of scripture, a natural, a spiritual, and a celestial sense; he describes to us the very form, and furniture, and apparatus of heaven; he retails to the reader his conversations with *angels*; he describes the condition of Jews, Mahometans, Christians, of the English, French, Dutch, of clergymen of every denomination, laity, &c. in another world; he has a key to unlock all the hitherto impenetrable secrets of futurity, and already, whilst in the body, “knows even as he is known.”

What is the inference? When *imagination* is permitted to usurp the place of *reason*, fanaticism becomes a christian duty, and enthusiasm the more *credible*, in proportion as it exceeds all bounds of *credibility*.

† Those who embrace the tenets of Baron Swedenborg, have very lately begun to form themselves into a separate connexion, under the name of the New Jerusalem Church.

What can induce men of *sense* to hearken to these dreams ? Early prejudices, confined reading, singular acquaintance, a reclusé life, a gloomy, speculative, abstracted turn of mind, and associating together, for a long time, particular, however *incongruous*, ideas.

This will account for *any* reveries. It accounts for *insanity*. And men, from this cause, may, in a *particular* instance (suppose religion,) be insane, though in all *other* respects, their minds are ever so enlightened, or ever so expansive.

It must, however, be said in favour of the mystics, that their principles inculcate in the strongest manner, the necessity of spiritual holiness and regeneration ; that their lives in general, are unblemished and exemplary. They are a quiet, retired people, who let the world go as it *will*, as to riches or promotions ; who enjoy indeed, in a passive *superiority*, those tumults of the crowd, as higher spirits may *condescend* to look down, with a pitying smile, on the toils of mortals ; and who deny themselves all the gayer pleasures, in order to relish, in a sublimer degree, all the raptures of devotion.

If the opinions of the quietists spring from spiritual pride, it is more than they suspect ; for they preach up the deepest self-abasement, annihilation, and poverty of spirit ; they almost starve the *animal* part of their nature, to nurse the *angelic*, and half *live* on meditation.

If such people have errors, they should be touched with a gentle hand. If they are misled, it is in *amiable* company. There is not a much more lovely name than that of Fenelon. Few men have possessed such a sweetness of piety.

I have but one wish for them, myself, or any other sect, and it is a wish of charity ; that what is wrong in *any of us*, may be done away, because I long to meet them all in the kingdom of heaven.

LETTER XXXVI.

THEOLOGY, like arts and sciences, has its scholastic, *technical* terms, and I will endeavour to explain them.

The *Arians* are so called from Arius, a presbyter of the church of Alexandria, in the year 315. He believed Christ to be God, but conceived him inferior to the Father, as to his deity and essence. The term, at present is indiscriminately applied to all, who, in any degree, embrace this opinion.

This heresy was first revived by Mr. Whiston, in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The works of Dr. Clarke afterwards entailed upon him the name of Semi-Arian (Half-Arian.)

Socinians derive their name from the illustrious family of Sozzini, which flourished, a long time, at Sienna in Tuscany, and produced several great and eminent men. Faustus Socinus, the great author of this sect, was born at Sienna in 1539, denied the divinity of Christ, the *personality* of the Holy Ghost, and the *perpetuity* of baptism, as a divine ordinance.

The most distinguished men, who have favored this opinion, are Le Clerc, Biddle, Lardner, Lowman, Fleming, Lindsey, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

THE Deists are so called, perhaps, from the Latin word, *Deus*, a God; because they acknowledge only the existence of a God, profess no particular form or system of religion, and only follow the law and light of nature. Of these, however, there are many *degrees*, from the moderate ones, who believe revelation in a certain, *qualified* sense, to those, who abso-

lutely disavow it in *all*. The first who figured or wrote, in this country, was Baron Herbert of Cherbury.

Deism is *generally* embraced, either by men of a cold, phlegmatic, philosophical cast, who are indisposed to believe any thing, for which they have not absolute demonstration, or by those, who, having never thought or reasoned, consider it, as a mark of wit and talents, to set up for unbelievers.

The first deserve an answer, and it is easy. All *nature* is full of mysteries, as well as revelation ; the union of soul and body is a *miracle* ; the infinite divisibility of matter, and the idea of an *eternal* duration are absolutely incomprehensible ; nothing can be more so, than the necessary *self-existence* of God. The latter are better answered with irony. Their infidelity is a fashionable *livery*. When deism is not in vogue amongst the gay circles, they will soon put it off, and disavow their ever having worn so obsolete a garb.

A third class of deists may be said to spring up from the superstitions of Rome. Great men, who live in catholic countries, are disgusted with their bigotry, and are apt to think religion in *general* only an *imposition* on the credulity of mankind. Was not this the case with all that splendid group, Rousseau, Voltaire, the Abbe de Raynal, and Helvetius, who wrote a famous treatise *de l'Esprit* ? Genius hates shackles, and shackles are the *peculiar* manufacture of Rome.

A fourth class of deists are continually produced by the love of fame, venting itself in paradoxes, and singular opinions to make a noise ; by an aversion to the strictness of gospel morality, and by criminal passions, which endeavour to hide their guilt in the shades of unbelief. Some of these have commenced authors, and endeavoured to immortalize their errors by the press. But their books, on a *near* view, have been found only gilt and lettered with *vanity*, and have quickly been consigned to the oblivion, they deserved. Whilst we

are in *this* world, enemies will mix these *tares* with the good seed of the gospel. We must wait till *harvest*, to see the final separation.

The deists are the greatest enemies, of all others, to true religion. Their pride and scepticism stop up every avenue, by which divine grace and conviction should be conveyed to the soul. Nature, with *them*, is only a *necessary* system of causes and effects. Creation rose into its present splendour, by a kind of *fatality*. Thunders roar, lightnings flash, volcanoes vomit, tempests rage, seas overflow, millions perish, and kingdoms are desolated, only by a train of *stated*, inevitable causes. They exclude a *first* efficient mover, and think not of the providence, which, at a certain moment, and for the wisest, *moral* causes, predestined such events.

Few of these men have *died* in peace. Their fortitude has deserted them, when they wanted its support. Their philosophy has vanished, as their strength has abated. The blast of death has demolished their splendid fabric, and their hopes and peace have *perished* in the ruins.*

LETTER XXXVIII.

MY DEAR GIRL,

TRAVELLERS, that have made (what is called) the grand tour, felicitate themselves on their return to England, and pronounce it the happiest coun-

* Atheist is the name, and Atheism the doctrine of such a person who entirely denies the existence of God. Whether any man ever did in his heart believe this absurd notion, is doubtful. But whoever pretends to it, may read his character in Psalm xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."

try in the world. And such it certainly is, if not in beauty and deliciousness of climate, yet in that absolute *security* of property it enjoys above all other nations, and that *liberty*, which endears every possession.

If you have made proper observations on the different, religious sects, that have passed in review before us, you will feel much the same sentiment, when you compare them with your own church.—You will be the *moral* traveller returned from more unpleasant scenes, to taste the blessings of true repose and dignity at home. Nor is this idea, I hope, the effect of prejudice, but springs from solid reason and conviction.

The Church of England* has enough of ceremony and *external* decency to strike the senses, and to support the dignity of religion, in the eyes of the vulgar, and yet nothing, that can justly offend the delicacy of the sublimest understanding. It aims not at the *total* abstraction of dissenters, nor affects the superstitious forms and ceremonies of the Church of Rome. Its piety has a rational, sedate, composed air, and is uniformly grave and decent without pretending to the flights, the fervours and the vision of some, *modern* fanatics.

The sacraments are not ridiculously multiplied, nor has *human* policy invented them. They are but two in number, baptism and the Lord's supper ; both positively enjoined by Christ, and neither of them supposed to have any further merit, than as they lead to purity of heart and conduct. The *liturgy* has been ad-

* The Church of England, together with the established Church of Ireland, forms only one of the three leading divisions of the Protestants. *Lutheranism* is the established religion in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Livonia, and a considerable part of Germany ; and *Calvinism* or *Presbyterianism* is the established religion in Scotland, Holland, and in several parts of Germany and Switzerland.

mired by the greatest men ; the ministers of this church are, in general, an ornament to their sacred profession, and perhaps on the whole, men of as great learning, candour, piety and moderation, as are to be found under any communion. That there were no *exceptions*, would be a *miracle*. There was a Judas amongst twelve apostles.

After all the *fine-spun* theories of liberty, every society must have a mode of government ; and that government supposes power to be lodged *some where* for the general good. That of the Church of England is vested in bishops ; no one will dispute the *antiquity*, or perhaps usefulness of the order, whatever he may object to its temporal distinctions. St. Paul appointed bishops in the primitive church.

Much abuse is often levelled against the sacred bench. But the shafts come from *envy*, and are pointed by religious prejudice and resentment. It is, in fact, their *temporal* emoluments, that provoke this ungenerous kind of persecution. But if they must attend *parliament*, they have indeed no *super-abundant* provision. Whilst it is thought expedient to have a *national* church, the interests of it, as connected with the state, must frequently be a subject of parliamentary discussion ; and it would be very extraordinary indeed, if they, who are most *immediately* concerned, should not have the liberty of giving their opinion and *votes* on the occasion. Whatever *equal* right, from education or abilities, the bishops may possess, along with the *temporal* peers of the realm, to deliver their sentiments on any *other* subject, they exercise it very *rarely*, and with great *discretion*. Their honors too, it should be observed, usually come late in life, and the hope, of attaining them, at some *distant* period, is doubtless, among the younger clergy, a strong incentive to emulation.

But prejudice apart, the bishops, in general, per-

form their sacred duties with great decorum, and the present bench can boast the names of several who, without the aid of purple, would be an ornament to human nature.

To suppose the Church of England without defects, would be supposing it not an *human* establishment. But innovation in religious systems, is a *dangerous* experiment. Projects of a reformation in our liturgy and articles have come from very suspicious quarters, and worn no very promising appearance. The little errors of this church are better trusted to the enlightened prudence and *moderation* of its governors, than the rash and daring spirit of adventurers, who, under the pretence of only attempting to remove its rubbish, might artfully undermine the very *foundation*, on which it rests. They who have talked most loudly on the subject of an alteration, have certainly displayed no very great attachment to the *essentials* of our holy faith.

We might, perhaps, borrow from *sectaries*, without any inconvenience, a little more *zeal*, fervour and animation. If our *internal* discipline, like theirs, was more rigidly enforced, and if, like them, we had a few more conferences with our people, and an opportunity of keeping the unworthy from the altar, we should be so much nearer the model of perfection.

But alas ! the *great* evil amongst us, is a want of *encouragement*. The church, at any rate, has but a small pittance. A learned prelate* has observed, that, if all its dignities, (bishopricks included,) were annulled, and their produce thrown into one common, equalizing fund, for the *general* support, the amount of annual salary, to every *individual* would not exceed £ 120, or at most, £ 150.

Under such circumstances, who can be very animated ? Or what energy can attend the exercise of our

* The B—p of L—d—ff.

profession in the eyes of a world, that superciliously appreciates the characters of men infinitely more by their temporal possessions, than by the graces of their heart, or the sublimity of their understanding. To a person of any refinement or sensibility, houses without conveniences, and children, without provision, are but a melancholy portion ! If *merchants* or *lawyers* had no better prospects, what would be *their* exertions ? And yet under all this heavy load of embarrassment, what great and good men do our annals boast ?

Fanatics, indeed, alledge, that pastors should be superior to all hopes of reward, except in heaven. Plato has likewise said that we should be raised above the sense of pain. But neither those visionaries nor this philosopher have been able to change the nature of things ; to take from nerves, their sensibility ; from the world, its insolence, from education, its delicacy, or from poverty, its stings.

And we have learned from an *higher* authority, than either of theirs, that “ the christian labourer is worthy of his hire, and that he who serves at the altar, should *live* of the altar.”

LETTER XXXIX.

BOOKS and rules of all kinds are the *theory* of religion, and can have no further use, than as they lead to *practice*. We have *then* profited by systems and opinions, when our life is a continual *comment* on what we have read, and we make the light of our example shine before men.

Christianity has but two, capital features ; love to God, evidence in acts of piety ; and good will towards man, exemplified in all the possibilities of doing good. As devotion, however necessary, can bring no profit

to our Maker, any more than a little taper can add to the splendors of the sun, the scriptures have laid the greatest stress on charity to our *fellow-creatures*. This is called the "end of the commandment;" it is the *embodying* of our piety; and the world could not subsist without it. Human life is full of woe. Charity is the *angel*, that binds up the sores of our fellow-creatures, heals the broken in heart, clothes the naked, and feeds the hungry. The poor are made the representatives of Christ; whatever we give to *them* is, in scripture language, bestowed on the *Saviour*. Moth and rust corrupt the treasures we hoard up, but this is placed in those funds of heaven, which never fail.

The Saviour has said, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." And the pleasures, which spring from charity, prove its origin to be divine. What value has an heap of money, or what conscious dignity do we derive from it, if it is not employed in giving comfort to the miserable, and protection to the distressed?

The very *poor* are provided for by the laws of the kingdom. And *common* beggars are far from being the most deserving objects. Charity should rather seek out the modest and uncomplaining who have seen better days, and have all the pains of a delicate sensibility, annexed to their distress.

True charity does not so much consist in multiplying little alms to a number of poor people, as in making some grand and well directed efforts in favour of a few. Educating one child of an overburthened family is a greater act of beneficence, than *retailing* to them, occasionally, a thousand, *petty* benefactions. It is not a few, scattered drops of rain, but it is a generous shower, coming all at once, which revives the parched earth, and quickens vegetation.

It is amazing what charities even a *small* fortune will enable people to perform, if under the influence

of a christian œconomy. A few retrenchments from dress, vanity or pleasure, poured into the christian stock, will make it rich indeed.

I do not know a better practice, than that of the primitive christians—laying by, on the first day of the week a little pittance for this purpose.—These drops will not be missed from the general reservoir, and yet, *collectively*, will rain a shower of blessings on many indigent and distressed.

LETTER XL.

YOUNG ladies have many methods of charity besides the mere act of giving *money*. That time, which sometimes hangs heavy on their hands, might be usefully employed in making garments for the naked, or providing cordials for the sick. Such an active benevolence would likewise be an excellent recipe for their health and spirits ; it would dignify their character, and when the *last* moment came, gratitude would “ shew the garments which a Dorcas had made,” and the good name “ they had acquired, would be infinitely richer, and more precious than ointment.”

If I wished a woman to be *universally* charming, I would recommend this expedient. Compassion is the highest excellence of your sex, and charity is the sacred root from which it springs. The soft bosom of a woman, throbbing with sympathy, or her eye glistening with crystal drops of pity, are some of the finest touches in nature’s pencil. The whole train of accomplishments, the whole group of graces do not exalt her half so much in the estimation of the worthy, the amiable and the discerning. Alas ! when death comes, what will be all the accomplishments and graces ? But *charity* shall never fail ; its pleasures *then* are

gaining their meridian of perfection. Remember what the scripture has said, "alms giving delivereth from death, and will not suffer us to come into darkness." The young lady you have so frequently heard me mention, as standing high in my esteem, is very eminently distinguished by this grace. Nature has been sufficiently kind to her *person*; but it is not her sweet complexion, it is not her flowing, unartificial ringlets, it is not the *softness* of her voice and manner, or the *mild* lustre of her eyes, that would have called forth a panegyric from my pen, or touched a breast, that is considerably petrified with philosophy and reflection. It is a conviction that she lives in the constant exercise of *piety*; that her excellencies are chiefly those of the *mind*, and that her benevolence is bounded only by creation.

When others are at plays or assemblies, *her* fair hands are making garments for the naked, or restoratives for the sick. The ingenuity, which some of her sister females employ to adorn *themselves*, is consecrated by *her*, to the service of the poor.

This is laying up in store against the day of necessity. This is weaving for herself a chaplet of laurels, that shall be green in age. Her countenance shall smile even in dissolution. A beauteous ruin "even in death she shall have power to charm;" and the gratitude of some admiring bard shall collect her scattered merits into an urn that shall long secure the precious relicks from the ravages of time.

But I will not add another touch to the portrait, for fear of discovering the excellent original. I should wound that soft and delicate timidity, which is, in my idea, the *enamel* of her graces. Her *true* merit wishes to be *unknown*. It is satisfied with its *own*, and the approbation of its *God*.

LETTER XLI.

ALMS, however, to the *body*, which must very soon perish, are but, if I may so say, the *threshhold*, of charity. The true *sublime* of it is compassion to the soul ; because that is immortal, and can never die.

Every effort to save *this*, is exalted in its nature, and the nearest approach we can make, in these houses of clay, to the ministry of angels, to the attributes of Jehovah, and to the unbounded compassion of him, who died for the sins of all.

A few, timely advices, instructions or reproofs to those, over whom our fortune or station give us any influence, may have more lasting and beneficial consequences, than all the food or raiment, or money we can possibly bestow ; at least when we give our temporal things, they should be perfumed with *spiritual*, “ with “ words, thus spoken in due season.”

The institution of Sunday Schools promises the happiest consequences to the poor, and the community at large. It has indeed, *already* produced a surprising reformation. The present age beholds the dawn of a blessed morning, which in another, may brighten into a more perfect day.

If it *fails*, it will be from careless and indolence in the *parents* themselves, or for want of attention from the *higher* orders of people. Many, who will give their money, are not equally liberal of their exertion. This grand scheme, however, requires an unremitting labour and vigilance. It is the watchful eye of *superiors*, which alone will produce exemplariness in the teachers, or, in the scholars, emulation. And I do not know a greater charity within the sphere of a young lady, than to visit the girls in these useful seminaries, in order to correct their foibles, encourage their dawning virtues, and stimulate them to improve-

ment. Close, uncomfortable rooms, it is true, in *cellars* or *garrets*, poisoned with unpleasant smells, and but filled with *poor children*, are no very inviting objects to those, who live in houses, “ceiled with cedar,” and painted with vermilion.” But the merit of the action is, doubtless, in proportion to its unpleasantness; and it is done for him, who on *our* account, refused neither hardship nor distress. These poor children, he has vouchsafed to call “his lambs,” and it is a most christian effort to “feed them.”

Such advice will, doubtless, sound very strange in the ears of some young ladies, who dare “scarcely set their feet upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness.” But this, alas! is a false and over-acted refinement. They were not born merely to vegetate, like tulips, for *ostentation*. The world, their friends, the poor, religion, have claims upon them. All nature, sun, moon, stars, tides, preach up the necessity of continual *action*; and I will venture to say, that this kind of exertion would be recompensed with such a secret pleasure, as they never found in the gayest circles of fashion, or the most crowded haunts of dissipation.

Another excellent mode of charity, is dispersing little, religious tracts amongst your poor neighbors. These, with the blessing of God, may have a wonderful effect, and indeed be doing most extensive good, when you are no more. Every family of servants should have small christian library; the benefits, I doubt not, would soon be felt in their *orderly* deportment.

The Society for promoting christian knowledge abounds with a variety of little, plain, useful treatises, that are suited to all occasions. You may easily procure a catalogue of the whole, and *select* such, as are most adapted to the state of your particular dependents.

On the whole, my dear girl, that time which tar-

nisheth the glory of all human things, will quickly lay both you and me, in the dust of the earth. Let us endeavour to extend this little span by amiable actions, and, if possible, render our memories immortal.

LETTER XLII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

THE very first thing I should recommend after religious duties, as absolutely essential to your private comfort, is *self-government* in the fullest sense of the word. This may be supposed to be included under the article of religion. And so in fact it is. But there are many well disposed people, that seem to think little things of this kind almost beneath their notice, though in reality they are interwoven with the repose of every day, and almost every moment.

The discipline of the *imagination* is the first thing to be attempted. This, in young people, is naturally warm; and if they are not cautious, will be apt to mislead them into very dangerous errors.

Thus whatever captivates their *fancy*, they take, without examination, to be all over excellence. Tinsel, because it *glitters* more, will be preferred to solid gold; a luxuriant, florid style in a writer, to the soundest and best arranged arguments; the shewy and brilliant in *characters*, to the truly valuable, and the gaudy in *dress*, to that artless simplicity, which is the offspring of an elegant and well cultivated taste.

Young people, almost universally subject themselves to this kind of *illusion*. They enter upon life, as an *enchanted* country. The world, in *their* idea, has no caprice; fortune, no vicissitude; friendship is without sincerity; attachment without bitterness, and marriage is

all happiness without alloy. What the scripture has called a *wilderness*, they make a *paradise*, whose landscapes are deliciously picturesque, and whose spring is ever green.

Experience, be assured, will not realize such high expectations. You will find, that every object has its imperfections ; that the world at best is but a mixture of good and ill, and that the lights of the picture will be interspersed with shades.

You will ask, where is the great harm of indulging, for a little while, these high colourings of fancy ? The inconvenience is obvious. It will expose you to perpetual disappointments, and disappointments will create disgust. By such a *false* sublimation, you will have no relish for the *rational* pleasures, and no resolution to perform the *solid* duties of your condition. At any rate, you will want a proper share of fortitude and patience to encounter the many unavoidable *ills* and calamities of life.

LETTER XLIII.

THE *next*, most important thing is the government of your *temper*. I know many persons, that would not, for the world, be absent from the sacrament, or refuse to do a generous action, yet indulge themselves, seemingly without remorse, in such little instances of ill-nature, peevishness, tyranny, and caprice towards their servants and inferiors, as render their houses a perpetual scene of discord, and hang, on every countenance, an uncomfortable gloom.

Such people should consider, that religion was intended to regulate the most *ordinary* actions of our lives ; that prayers sacraments, and opportunities of doing *great* good come, comparatively, but seldom ;

but that it is every moment, in our power to diffuse happiness amongst our domestics, and that this, if it proceeds from *proper* motives, will be an acceptable service to the God, who has appointed all the different ranks in society, and is the father of all compassion. Nor have we much imbibed the true spirit of the gospel, if it has not taught us to bear patiently the imperfections of our fellow-creatures, and to temper authority with gentleness and good nature.

No *Consequence* can justify one single act of *caprice*, fullness or ill-humour. It is a direct violation of that *universal* law of charity, which requires us, in all our actions, to keep in view, the happiness of *others*, as well as our *own*.

Tyranny is a downright insult to any creature formed in the image of God ; it would be unpardonable, if exercised even to a worm or insect, and generally proceeds from causes, which reflect no honor on the heart or understanding. It is often the result of a *new-born* greatness, that has not yet learned how to bear superiority ; of a spleen, collected from want of employment, or a *natural*, ill-temper, that never has submitted to the discipline of virtue.

Mildness is necessary to *our own* comfort. They, who are continually tormenting *others*, must be wretched *themselves*. It is essential to the dignity of our *own* character ; and it is, I am sure, the highest *policy*, whether we mean to secure the *affections*, or the good *services* of our dependents.

It is a pitiful condescension in a woman of fortune to aggravate every little cause of complaint. A ruffled, angry, scolding woman is so far *vulgar* and disgusting, and, for the moment, a sort of *virago*.

Moderation is the great secret of government. To be always dissatisfied is the way to lose all authority and respect. The consequence of those people is most

cheerfully acknowledged, who seem the least forward to assert it.

And what says the law of all wisdom and of all perfection? “Masters, give unto your servants, that which
“is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a master
“in heaven. Put on, as the elect of God, bowels of
“mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, long suffer-
“ing, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.
“Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.
“Be pitiful, be courteous.”

If the gospel was published “to bring peace on earth,
“and good-will towards men,” this kind affection
should *begin* with families, which, *collectively*, compose
all the nations of the world.

LETTER XLIV.

THE piety, I have recommended, will make you
always happy in yourself, and respected by all
the worthy and discerning, though you should happen
to have none of those *intellectual* endowments, which
procure a greater share of fame and *admiration*. But
you may be *sensible*, as well as *pious*; you may be *entertaining*,
as well as *good*. Your reason and understanding were given
you to be *improved*; a *proper* pursuit of knowledge, at the
same time, will aid and inflame your *piety*, and render you
much more valuable and interesting to all your acquaintance.
When the *foundation* is laid in virtue, the *superstructure* may
have every graceful embellishment.

Knowledge will recommend you to many, over
whom *mere* piety would have no power. It will give a
greater energy to your *goodness*. The picture will be

thus elegantly framed, and placed in the best point of view.

Learned women, however, have been often a proverb of reproach, feared by their own sex, and disliked by ours. A neglect of their person, and of family concerns, as of little things beneath a *superior understanding*; a vain ostentation of their abilities in *company*, and upon all occasions, a supercilious contempt of their sister women in general, and an ungraceful avidity for the company of men, have been reckoned amongst their distinguished characteristics.

The truth is, some females have been *viragos* in their knowledge, not only injudicious in the *kind* they have aspired to, but the *use* they have made of it, and an *indiscriminate* stigma has been fixed upon all, who have endeavoured *rationaly* to improve their understandings.

On the other hand, it is said of women, that they are so ignorant, frivolous and insipid, as to be unfit for friendship, society or conversation; that they are unable, to amuse, entertain or edify a lonely hour, much more to bless or grace that connexion, for which they were principally formed.

What, my dear girl, can a *judicious* woman do, in such a dilemma? How must she act to avoid the imputation of pedantry on the one hand, and ignorance on the other.

There is a narrow, *middle* path betwixt these extremes. Judgment must point it out, and good sense direct you in the execution.

The prominent excellencies of your minds are taste and imagination, and your knowledge should be of a kind, which *assimilates* with these faculties. Politics, philosophy, mathematics, or metaphysics are not *your* province. Machiavel, Newton, Euclid, Malebranche or Locke would lie with a very ill grace in your closets. They would render you *unwomanly* indeed. They would damp that vivacity and destroy that disengaged

ease and *softness*, which are the very *essence* of your graces.

The *elegant* studies are, more immediately, *your* department. They do not require so much time, abstraction or comprehensiveness of mind ; they bring no wrinkles, and they will give a polish to your manners, and such a liberal expansion to your understanding as every *rational* creature should endeavour to attain.

Whilst *men*, with solid judgment and a superior *vigour* are to combine ideas, to discriminate, and examine a subject to the bottom, *you* are to give it all its *brilliancy* and all its charms. *They* provide the furniture ; *you* dispose it with propriety. *They* build the house ; *you* are to fancy, and to ornament the *cieling*.

Cultivate, then, such studies, as lie within the region of sentiment and taste. Let your knowledge be *feminine*, as well as your person. And let it glow *within* you, rather than sparkle upon others about you. A diamond, so polished, will always be valued. You will charm all, but the ignorant and vulgar. You will be a rational, entertaining companion, and the symmetry of your features will derive a double lustre from the beauties of your mind.

LETTER XLV.

ENDEAVOUR to acquire a taste for the beauties of fine writing, as it is displayed in our present, numerous list of English classics, the Spectators, Tatlers, the Guardian, the Rambler, the Adventurer, the World, &c. I have placed Addison at the *head* of this catalogue, because he, more frequently than any of the rest, gives lessons of morality and prudence to your sex, and, for delicacy of sentiment, is peculiarly

adapted to female reading. There is sometimes perhaps, a *langour* in his papers. He may not have all that fire and energy and pathos, which have since characterized some celebrated writers ; but for ease, gracefulness, simplicity and nature, he is absolutely without a rival, and, perhaps, *ever will* be without a superior. A critic* of modern times has said, that whoever would write the English language with ease, should spend his days and nights in reading the works of Addison.

To this frequent perusal of the best writers, add, if possible, an acquaintance with some *living* characters of improved education. *Conversation* with people of genius and sentiment is the easiest and quickest way to improvement. It gives us all its graces, without its austeries ; its depth, without its wrinkles. We soon grow languid and gloomy with *abstracted* studies, weary of ourselves, and sated with our pursuits. Conversation gently *agitates* the sedentary frame, and gives a brisker motion to the blood and spirits. The countenance is flushed with pleasure ; the eyes sparkle, and the heart expands and glows with emulation.

LETTER XLVI.

TO write *letters* well is a very desirable excellence in a woman. Every situation, character, connexion, devotion, friendship, love, business, *all* require the exercise of this talent. It is an office particularly suited to the liveliness of your fancy, and the sensibility of your heart ; and your sex, in general, much excels our own, in the *ease* and graces of epistolary correspondence. Not cramped with the shackles and formality

* Dr. Johnson.

of rules, their thoughts are expressed *spontaneously*, as they flow, and become, more immediately, (what a letter always *should* be,) a lively, amusing, *written* conversation. A *man* attends to the niceties of grammar, or well turned periods ; a *woman* gives us the effusions of her soul. The first may please a few, languid critics ; the latter will delight every person of sensibility and discernment.

I had once the honour of corresponding with a lady, whose letters astonished me. Imagery, taste, pathos, spirit, fire and ease vied with each other, which should be the most *conspicuous* feature in the productions of her pen. They came not from the *head* ; it was the *heart*, which wrote them. They were not faultless, but they were impassioned. They had defects, but they had likewise beauties, which must have warmed the coldest critic, that ever existed. They were interesting to an high degree, and left this conviction strongly on my mind, that we often *labour* only to be dull, and, in the search of *distant* ornaments, chill the natural fervours of the soul.

LETTER XLVII.

WITH the history of your *own* country you cannot decently be unacquainted. It would betray an unpardonable ignorance, if you could not tell, on being asked in company, the general character of all the sovereigns, that have sat upon the British throne ; what were the religion, manners, customs, ceremonies of the primitive inhabitants of the Island ; by what means the present state of civilization has been gradually introduced ; what contributed to bring about our reformation from the Church of Rome ; at what period the outline of our happy constitution first began to be sketched out,

and what is the particular excellence of our government, over all others in the known world.

If indeed you consider history in its proper light, not as a mere detail of names, facts, epochs, and events, but as a picture of human nature, and of the wonderful administration of Providence, apportioning rewards and punishments to nations, and frequently to individuals, according their actions it will become not only an entertaining study, but a source of the sublimest, *moral* improvement. It will give you the richest knowledge of men and things ; from what *has* happened, you may deduce what *will*, in similar situations ; and you will learn to adore the wisdom, justice and perfections of him, who, under all the changes of time, falls of empire, the conflicts of passion, and the interests of man, is the same “ yesterday, to-day, and “ for ever ;” carrying on, amidst all *apparent* disorder, one grand and comprehensive scheme of happiness and probation.

Goldsmith has agreeably abridged and condensed the English history, in a well-known work of two small volumes intitled Letters from a Nobleman to his Son. If your curiosity is excited to pursue this study on a larger scale, Henry will give you every thing that delights in genius, language, colouring and description.†

Hume is by no means, an *impartial* historian, but he is a very splendid, captivating writer. If he is not dispassionate, he is always enchanting ; and, if he does not uniformly convince, he never fails to charm.

It had been happy for this writer, if he had never attempted any thing but *history*. He might then have gone to his grave with unequivocal applause. But in

† “ Dr. Henry’s History of Great-Britain contains more “ good matter than any history we yet have.”

Analytical Review, Number III,
for July 1788, p. 297.

his moral and metaphysical works, he is an enemy to the dearest interests of mankind. He has endeavoured to sap the foundations of that religion, which is the only source of every hope and every comfort. His cold and *sullen* scepticism has done infinite mischief. It more than nullifies all the luster of his literary fame.

LETTER XLVIII.

ROBERTSON's history of Charles the fifth, and of Mary Queen of Scots, will both instruct and entertain you. The historiographer has been esteemed an excellent writer. But I have always, in private, thought his style too laboured and stately. It has not the ease and simplicity of the ancients. It does not equal several of the moderns. It has neither the concise energy of Hume, nor the more flowing and easy graces of Gibbon.

The late Dr. Stewart, in a very elegant work, has controverted almost all the assertions of his predecessor, concerning Mary, and become the champion of this unfortunate queen. But *you* have nothing to do with literary controversy. Leave them to the tribunal of an impartial public. *Time* will weigh their separate merits in the balance of truth. Either or both of them will exercise your taste, and improve your understanding.

Stretch's *Beauties of History** will furnish you with many short, agreeable anecdotes, both ancient and modern, at a very small expence of time and trouble. Knowledge thus *epitomized*, is what I should recommend. On such subjects, you want short and

* A new Edition of which has lately been published in Dublin, in 2 vols. Price 6s. 6d.

pithy sketches, rather than labored and prolix dissertations.

The history of Greece and Rome is so frequently alluded to, so connected with that of almost all other nations, and so full of curious incidents and anecdotes, that a little knowledge of it would be very useful and entertaining. But, in general, the writers on the subject are too voluminous for a *female*. They make up no little share of the labour, in a classical education. Goldsmith has likewise given his assistance to epitomize this branch of history. I know no other writer so proper for your purpose.

To attain just a *glimpse* of general history, the most useful work I recollect, is the Abbe Millot's *Elements sur l'Histoire*. On *his* comprehensive and condensed plan, there is much in a little compass. By travelling over a few fields, you gain a most immense and extended horizon, and many tracts of *hitherto* undiscovered country. History at large is so voluminous and complicated, that, to a young lady, who should understand, as it were, but the *outline*, it very much wants such a mode of abridgement, and *simplification*.

LETTER XLIX.

MY DEAR LUCY,

ROLLIN's ancient history is a treasure to young people, if the number of volumes does not alarm you. This man was one of the most excellent preceptors, that the world ever saw. It was his ambition to *unite* the scholar, and the christian. He labours to promote religious improvement by every incident, he relates. He holds forth Providence, as continually superintending the government of the universe,

and its finger, as directing all the *movements* of the system ; and, when he has related a number of surprising vicissitudes and events, he takes his pupil up “ to “ an high mountain, from whence he shows him all “ the kingdoms of the world, and all the glories of “ them” to be continually under the control and direction of heaven, and not *collectively* to possess half the lustre of the excellence of one, pious disposition.

Under the pen of this most christian writer, every *baser* metal is purified from its alloy. Every sounding action is divested of its *bombast*, and traced to its *real* source. Splendour has no dignity, if unassociated with *virtue*. Ambition is painted as a *fury*, that destroys. Heroism is represented, as *murder* in disguise. The laurels of an Alexander are wrested from his brow. Cæsar is stripped of his fictitious plumage. They are both described, as vultures, preying on their species, who were born to be only the *scourges* of humanity, and a terror to the world.

This man deserves universal veneration. His pupils should have raised a monument to his memory, and posterity have rendered that monument *immortal*. Learning and religion should be grouped over his tomb, mingling their united tears for the loss of his virtues.

If you have not leisure to peruse his writings, yet be careful to read all *other* history with *this* view, and it will lead you to God. It will teach you, no longer to be dazzled with grandeur, because grandeur fades away. It will show you, that vices have demolished the mightiest empires, and swept the finest cities “ with “ the besom of destruction.” It will convince you, that every thing on earth is a shadow, and that neither men nor nations “ continue in one stay.” It will assure you, that, “ though clouds and darkness may be “ about the throne of God, yet righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his seat.” It will instruct

you, that *every* action is “weighed in its balance;” that, however, *seemingly*, disregarded for a *time*, vice and virtue will have their just proportion of punishment or reward, and that nothing but *religion* will be able to triumph, amidst the crush of elements, of matter, and the world.

LETTER L.

MY DEAR LUCY,

THOUH I think every woman in the world should execrate the memory of the late Lord Chesterfield, as having written the most scandalous libels on her sex, yet his sketches of heathen mythology, of Grecian, Roman, and British history in the first volume of his letters, are well worth your attention. If this ingenious nobleman had given us more specimens of *this* nature, and fewer lectures on *the graces* and *intrigue*, the gratitude of posterity would have *imbalm*ed his ashes. He was certainly possessed of an elegant style, and had a very happy method of conveying his instructions.

But in order to make any real improvement in this, or any *other* of your studies, let me advise you to read only one half hour, at a time, and to employ a *double* space, in abridging and expressing what you recollect, in your *own* language. This will have the double advantage of impressing it very strongly on your memory, and enabling you to form a style of your own.

Though a good style is, doubtless, a mark of genius, and not attainable by every person, yet it depends amazingly on *mechanical* habit, as well as our gait, countenance or gesture. The pen accustomed to a certain routine of period, performs it as insensibly, as

the memory retraces all the variations of notes in a song, whilst, perhaps, we are silently, occupied with some other object.

Be so kind as to indulge me with a sight of these sheets exactly as they are penned from your *first* impressions, and I will endeavour to correct them. Banish the *childish* fear of betraying any ignorance, where I cannot *expect* you to be informed; and, if some, essential alterations should be made, remember it is the pen of friendship which erases, guided by that affection, with which I have the honour to be,

Your ever faithful
and affectionate.

LETTER LI.

THAT species of history, which describes the lives and characters of particular persons, and is included under the name of biography, is by far the most useful and interesting to a woman. Instead of wars, sieges, victories or great achievements, which are not so much within the province of a female, it presents those *domestic* anecdotes and events, which come more forcibly home to her bosom and her curiosity.

I have always thought that one great advantage of boys over girls, is their having the most illustrious characters of antiquity to form their sentiments, and fire their emulation. Biography will open to you the *same* source of improvement. You will read of persons, elevated with every noble sentiment and virtue; and your judgment and taste will select some particular favorite from the group, as a model for your imitation.

Though Johnson has been so very much celebrated in the republic of letters for *all* his productions, yet I have always thought his *Lives of the Poets* by far

his most agreeable performance. It has not that turgid pomposity of style, which appears in some of his more juvenile labours ; it is, all along, interspersed with judicious sentiments and moral reflections ; it abounds with an original vein of criticism, and anecdotes of so many illustrious men, as cannot fail to amuse, as well as to instruct. His criticisms, it is true, have been controverted, and traduced ; but what writings of merit are exempt from such a tax ? The enthusiastic admirers of Milton, in particular, have handled him with severity. But who does not know, that favourites, at any rate, will be defended ?

But indeed all men of sense *unite* in paying a sincere tribute of respect to the memory of Johnson. In spite of all his petty and *ungenerous* biographers, the sneers of party malice, or the still sharper arrows of insidious *friends*, he stands an huge colossus, in the bosom of an ocean, unmoved with the angry dashing of its waves.

Johnson in all his multiplied productions, has not a single period, that can patronize indecency, or unhinge belief. And, though, *now*, it signifies but little to this extraordinary man, that he was considered as an oracle of knowledge in his day, as an ornament to his country, and a blessing to the world, it must transport him to recollect, that he has carefully endeavoured to diffuse happiness, as widely as his writings, and to render piety diffusive as his fame. The death of the author will exempt me from suspicions of flattery or design in this little panegyric. Gratitude may be allowed to offer, without any censure, this little incense, to his venerable shade.

If all the *private* anecdotes of every person's life and temper must be arraigned before the tribunal of the public, who could escape ? If Johnson *was* unaccommodating, rough and morose, let it be remembered, that these were but little *pimples* on a *skin*, where the *heart* glowed with universal benevolence ; let it

be considered, that conflicts, disappointments and misfortunes are unfriendly to sweetness of manners or disposition ; that severe application has a tendency to render any man irritable and peevish ; that gaiety and sprightliness *considerably* arises from an ease of circumstances ; and let us oppose to these a piety, that was profound and warm, almost, to *superstition*, and unwearyed labours for the service of mankind, which scarcely knew a moment's interruption.

LETTER LII.

SULLY's Memoirs, in five volumes, are interspersed with very curious and interesting anecdotes ; and the private life of Louis XV. is a very entertaining work. Indeed the French particularly shine in biographical writing. It is quite in *their* province, and forms a part of the national taste. Their imagination sparkles, in an especial manner, in painting the complexion of courts, monarchs or personages of distinction. *They* feel as great an ardour for extolling the virtues of their *le roi* and his attendants, as *we* do for recording all the great achievements of the field or ocean.

The Marquis Caraccioli is universally known, as an author of great vivacity and talents. He has written the life of Pope Clement XIV. and it does honour to his pen, as well as to the memory of the sovereign pontiff.

If the Marquis really wrote the letters, which go under the name of Ganganelli, he has hit off, with a wonderful address, the air and features of the illustrious original. The habits, sentiments, manners and disposition of the Pope, as couched in this life, all breathe through these letters.

The name of Dr. Johnson, and the intimacy known to have subsisted betwixt the parties, have given a great currency to Mrs. Piozzi's anecdotes, relating to this literary hero. But they have not *immortalized* either her talents, or the goodness of her heart. They are a most disgusting specimen of treachery in friendship; a copious effusion of *spleen*, that had *long* been collecting. They remind one forcibly of a number of little insects, nimbling at their ease, on the *carcase* of some noble animal, that a *single* motion of the *living* creature would have dispersed in an instant, or crushed into atoms.

LETTER LIII.

WRAXALL is a very agreeable author, and he has chosen a fruitful happy subject, in his *Memoirs of the Kings of France, of the House of Valois*. The execution is not inferior to the judiciousness of the design. His book has an admirer in every person of sentiment and taste.

The late Mr. Sheridan is allowed to have possessed considerable abilities. He has given the world a specimen of them in his *life of Swift*. It is, however, in my idea, too flattering a portrait. The painter was a countryman, and an admirer. No talents can convert deformity into beauty, or make darkness to be light.

Swift was a very great, original genius: but the indecency of some of his writings is intolerable; his spleen, excessive, and his behaviour to Stella an *eternal* stigma on his memory and his virtues. Ever dabbling in the turbid ocean of politics, what business had he with the quiet and retired haven of the church? But genius and talents can embellish any side of a subject,

and the biographer has poured, on his favourite author, a deluge of panegyric.

The life of Garrick is so much interspersed with the *domestic* history, and the most illustrious persons of his time, that it will highly engage and gratify your curiosity. It is written by Davies in two volumes.

England has long laboured with a disorder, that I cannot call by a better name, than the *theatrical mania*. A principal actor is more distinguished, caressed and enriched by a luxurious nation, than many of the most deserving persons, in the learned professions. An Abingdon, a Siddons, and a Mara (as once a Garrack, a Henderson, and a Yates,) inchant the feelings of a British audience, drain the money which should be sacred to better purposes, acquire, in a few years, an independent fortune and are admitted to the first circles in the kingdom, whilst a thousand, amiable and meritorious clergymen are suffered to live in want, and to die in the most uncomfortable obscurity. This is not a very favourable trait in the *moral* history of a nation. It seems rather a symptom of its approaching dissolution.

Hume was a great champion of infidelity, and as such, a character, that excites uncommon curiosity. He has written his own life, and, as an unique in biography, it is worthy your reading.

Bolingbroke was another of the *sceptical* family. His history is agreeably recorded by Dr. Goldsmith.

On the subject of biography, you will meet with a great variety of other, entertaining writers ; but I must not close this article, without particularly recommending a book, that has given me so much pleasure and information, as the life and writings of Gray, by Mr. Mason.

A particular friendship of the warmest and most disinterested kind, subsisted betwixt these celebrated authors. It commenced in that early period of life, when souls are incapable of guile or selfishness and mu-

tually *expand*; and Maſon has endeavoured to immortalize it in a manner, which does equal credit to his heart and underſtanding.

The hiſtory of a retired, literary perſon cannot, generally, preſent much variety of entertainment. But in the character of Gray, there is ſomewhat very *interesting*; and his friend has diſplayed it to the greateſt advantage. No man, perhaps, by ſuch *ſlight* ſketches, as the author of an Elegy in a country church-yard has left behind him, ever acquired ſo extenſive a reputation. And there was a dignity, a ſoftneſs and a delicacy in his *whole* manner of thinking and acting, which compenſate for the want of more remarkable anæcdotes, and of more ſounding connexions.

LETTER LIV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

“ THERE is not (ſays a ſenſible writer,) a
 “ ſon or daughter of Adam, who has not
 “ ſome concern in the knowledge of Geography.”
 It is neceſſary to your underſtanding the connexion, which this globe has with the other planetary ſyſtem, and with all the wonderful works of God. It is indiſpenſible to your comprehending hiſtory, or having a proper idea of the events and tranſactions it relates, as well as to divest your mind of little narrow prejudices by giving you a view of the cuſtoms, manners, ceremonies and inſtitutions of all the different nations over the world.

A celebrated writer* has called geography and

* Lord Cheſterfield.

chronology, the two *eyes* of history ; the first informs you *where* events happened, and the latter, at what particular *period* ; if it was not for these helps your reading would be a confused chaos, without order, light or perspicuity.

Geography is, indeed, so much attended to at all schools, that there is little occasion to dwell on its necessity ; if you have learned the use of the globes, and the division of it by names, which are only *fancied* for the sake of reducing the immensity of it to the narrow scale of human comprehension, the best method, I know, is never to read the name of a place in a common news paper, or any other history, without immediately recurring to authorities for the situation and division of the country in which it lies, the manners of the inhabitants, their ceremonies, civil government, and religious institutions. It is this mode of studying from the *urgency* of the occasion, which gives energy to our researches and vigour to improvement.

Guthrie is one of the best authors in geography ; and for chronology, the tables of Dr. Priestley (a name, which I would only mention, where science and not *religion*, is concerned,) are so compendious and comprehensive, as to afford you, on a single glance, considerable information. There is no species of knowledge, that is so easily attained, as that of geography ; nor any of which the want is more flagrant and awkward.

I lately blushed for a young lady, who was asked in company, the latitude and situation of a particular place, which happened to be mentioned in the public papers of the day. She was dressed in the highest taste. The roses and carnations vied in her countenance. She piques herself on her smartness and vivacity ; but in this instance, could make no reply. Her *embarrassment* betrayed her ignorance, and, *politencfs* relieved it by a change of conversation.

How much higher would her character have stood in the estimation of all sensible and discerning men, if she had come down stairs, dressed in an elegant plainness, and, instead of standing so long before her glass, had devoted some little share of her time to this species of improvement. Not that I have any objection to a blush upon a woman's cheek. I think the crimson tint ornamental; but I would have *yours* to be the blush of *delicacy* and *reserve*, not of *ignorance*, *shyness* or *ill-breeding*.

LETTER LV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

NATURAL history is another study, which I conceive to be particularly *feminine*. It has, of late, been cultivated with uncommon attention. Botany has been, particularly, fashionable. It has found a place in the amusements of the elegant, as well as the learned. Nothing is more calculated to amuse the mind, improve the health and spirits, and to inspire at once cheerfulness and devotion.

The surprising history of plants and flowers, the immense variety, the mechanism, order, government and economy of animals, fowls with their plumage and fishes with their scales, fossils, minerals, petrefactions, mountains, vallies, volcanoes, all nature full of life, full of happiness and full of miracles, will crowd your mind with the sublimest images, and teach you to adore the great, almighty former and preserver of the world. What beauty in each flower! What traits of divine wisdom and goodness in an insect! Surveyed with a truly philosophical eye, the whole creation is a

temple ! Not a shrub, but is eloquent, not an animalcule, but is a powerful monitor of virtue !

I never spend an afternoon with Miss Louisa — without being both instructed and delighted. I never take a walk with her in the garden, but she unfolds a thousand, natural curiosities, which had hitherto escaped my unscienced or inattentive eyes. I never ramble with her into the fields, but she gives me such an history of the most common plants and flowers, as at once surprizes my curiosity, and gratifies my taste. In her closet she has a large collection of insects, which her microscope clothes with most exquisite beauty, and a museum, filled with shells, corals, and petrefactions, the sparkling of which is exceeded by nothing, but the vivacity of her eyes, or the stronger or more permanent lustre of her virtues.

I would infinitely rather have her taste, than her fortune. And I never quit her without secretly envying her enjoyments. She is ever sprightly, because she has never a moment *unemployed*. She always *smiles*, because she is always innocent. Her pleasures are of the rational and *refined* kind. They never leave a thorn in the heart, or pluck one, blushing rose from her cheeks. How solid and how calm, if compared with the midnight revels of fashion, or the giddiness of admiration !

Be like Louisa, my dear girl, and you will always be happy. Study nature, till it leads you up to nature's God. Pore on plants and flowers, till they perfume you with a *real* devotion ; and I will engage you to become, in your turn, one of the most beautiful flowers in the creation.

LETTER LVI.

NATURAL history is divided into three grand parts, as it respects the animal, the mineral,

and the vegetable kingdoms, and under these different articles, assumes the name of zoology, or an history of animals ; lithology, or a description of stones, fossils, &c. and botany, or an account of herbs, plants, flowers. These again have, each their respective subdivisions.

Linnæus, who was born at Upsal, is the great father of this science, and from the Swedish schools have issued the works of the most eminent masters. But he is too voluminous and scientific for a female, who wants only a *general* knowledge of nature, and not to penetrate the minutiae of her plan.

The *Amanitates Academica* are a number of ingenious essays on a variety of subjects, selected from the works of the most capital disciples of the Linnæan school. Some of these have been translated by Stillingfleet, under the name of 'Tracts on Natural History, and are very valuable and instructive ; others by Brand, in two volumes, which contain a number of very curious and entertaining descriptions.

Pulteny's View of the Works of Linnæus you may read, likewise, with great pleasure and improvement. Next to these I should recommend to a mere English reader, the works of Ray ; him, who wrote " The wisdom of God in the creation." They are highly useful and valuable, though written before this study had arrived to its present state of perfection.

Goldsmith's History of the Earth and animated Nature is but a mere compilation. Still it may have its use, as affording some *collateral* lights and instruction.

Buffon is an author of first rate abilities. His style is splendid ; his knowledge is extensive, and his eloquence, in a high degree, brilliant and seducing. But I cannot recommend him for many reasons. He is too *voluminous* ; the extensiveness of his plan leads him into a great variety of detail, and of *indelicate* descriptions. He is more attached to systems of his own,

than the discovery of truth ; and he is a sort of *sceptic*, who resolves every thing into a chain of *secondary* causes, and *sacrilegiously* excludes the Deity from his creation. This temper is the *bane* of *modern* philosophers. They endeavour to account for *every* thing upon *natural* principles, and wherever they are puzzled, ridiculously disbelieve. Instead of making their knowledge, a scaffolding to God, they build on it, a monument to their own vanity and folly, which will not stand, “ when winds and storms arise.” Do people of such distinguished abilities need to be reminded, that a world without design, or an active machine, without a *first*, moving principle, involves the greatest and most palpable of contradictions? Nature, in the hands of a *true* philosopher, reads a continual lesson of piety ; in those of a *false* one, it is the parent of scepticism, gloom and despair. Sir Isaac Newton was the most pious of men ; many of his *humble* followers have been as impious *retailers* of infidelity.

You will derive great pleasure and improvement from all the writings of Mr. Pennant, and they are numerous. Always lively and always authentic, they entertain the man of taste, the scholar, and the antiquarian, as well as the naturalist. Few persons have published so much, in any one department of science, with so great success.

The *Flora Londinensis* of Curtis is a splendid work, that does credit to the author. It is embellished with beautiful engravings of all the common plants and flowers of this country, and is still in continuation.

Volcanoes are amongst the *prodigies* of nature, which fill the mind with the grandest and sublimest images. Hamilton’s account of them, and Raspe on the volcanos in Germany, will astonish your imagination. You may add to the list Swammerdam’s *History of Insects*, translated by Floyd, and revised by Dr. Hill.

But I will desist, for if I was to give you only the *names* of writers on the subject, they would fill a volume. No private fortune would be sufficient to purchase them, and the perusal would require more time, than would consist with your other, various engagements.

LETTER LVII.

WHEN you have viewed the wonders of nature in *miniature*, astronomy will shew them in the *sublime*. Telescopes will present you with a most stupendous view of the heavens ; suns piled on suns ; worlds on worlds ; and the great creator, presiding over all, in the majesty of perfection. You will be lost and *absorbed* in the magnificent contemplation. You will feel yourself as nothing before God, and confess him to be all in all.

A real astronomer must be *pious* or insensible. However some have thought *revelation* partial, the language of these *orbs* is certainly *universal*, “ Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words “ unto the ends of the world.” The sentiment they proclaim, is majesty to God ; to man, humility, self-abasement, devotion.

Nicholson’s Introduction to Natural Philosophy, in two volumes, octavo, is an excellent book upon this subject, and Derham’s Astro-theology must elevate the mind, and improve the heart of every reader. Gregory’s Astronomy, and Huygen’s Celestial Worlds discovered, are very useful and entertaining, and may together form a sufficient library for this department of science. Perhaps I should have added Ray’s Wisdom of God, in the Creation. They, who declaim against knowledge, in a woman, have not surely considered how much *this*, and many, *other* branches of it, are connected with all the sublime and pious affections.

LETTER LVIII.

POETRY, I do not wish you to cultivate, further than to possess a *relish* for its beauties. Verses, if not excellent, are execrable indeed. The muses live upon a *mount*, and there is no enjoying any of their favors, unless you can climb to the heights of Parnassus.

Besides a passion for poetry is dangerous to a woman. It heightens her natural sensibility to an extravagant degree, and frequently inspires such a romantic turn of mind, as is utterly inconsistent with all the solid duties and proprieties of life.

To increase the number of *imaginary*, when life abounds with such *real* sorrows, by nursing a sickly extravagant sensibility, is, in a rational creature, the very height of imprudence. The ancients endeavored to cherish fortitude, and resolution, by giving strength to the body and vigour to the mind. From some of their states, poetry, amongst other things, was absolutely *excluded*, as tending to *enervate* the minds of a people, and unfit them for the struggles and activities of life; and it is certain that the owners of an exquisite sensibility, for a few *moments* of pleasure have *days* of vexation. In this human wilderness, *thorns* are perennials. *Roses* are but the *perishable* ornaments of summer.

The late Mr. Shenstone, amongst many others, is an unhappy instance of the misfortune, I have mentioned. His works, though not of the *first* magnitude, are exceedingly agreeable; but his poetical enthusiasm was a source of *perpetual* irritation and misfortune. Having cultivated his taste, more than his prudence, his feelings, more than his fortitude, and his imagination, more than his judgment, his life was one, unvaried train of inquietudes. His mind was ruffled with *imaginary* injuries; his peace disturbed with *fanciful* affronts, and his disordered finances left him every thing, but comfort, dignity, and independence.

With a fortune, that only justified a neat and *homely* dwelling, his genius was not content with less than the superb appendages of a palace. In forming the *Lease-owes*, he sacrificed to enthusiasm, what he owed to contentment. He panted for a *paradise*, and a paradise he had ; but it soon became a wilderness of thorns. Merciless creditors had no candour for the poet, and made no allowance for the exquisiteness of his taste.

They saw no charms in shrubs, in blossoms, or in prospects, and they awoke him with an iron grasp, from his delicious intrancement. Whilst a noble neighbour, emulating and outvying, on a *larger* scale, the beauties of his elysium, or exhibiting it to a stranger, from an unfavorable point of view, inflicted on his sickly feelings, an heartfelt affliction, which he had neither the possibility of avoiding, nor the philosophy to support.

LETTER LIX.

THOUGH I do not wish you to become a poet, it is, however, necessary, that you should not be wholly unacquainted with the writings of many, inimitable bards. They will certainly refine your taste, and spread a very elegant repast for your private amusement.

Shakespeare is, perhaps, the first genius of the world ; and some of his dramatic works, whilst they astonish, will give you an useful fund of historical information.

The immortal poem of *Paradise Lost* should not only be in the *hands*, but graven on the *heart*, of every woman, because Milton, above all other authors, describes the distinguishing graces of the sex, and in his *Eve*, has exhibited an exquisite pattern of female perfection. On *this* subject, his feelings were always awakened in an extraordinary manner ; his imagination glowed, and he has given it the finest touches of his pencil.

Milton, like all great men, was fully sensible of the blessings we derive from the society of women, and how *cheerless* the face of nature would have been without them. He, therefore, *labors* to make the mother of his Paradise every thing, that could charm, and every thing that could alleviate the infelicities of life. Let the libertine read his description of marriage, and tell me what he thinks of the prevailing rage for impurity and seduction.

Homer is universally celebrated ; and, though you cannot read his poem in the original language, Pope has given an admirable translation. The same may be said of Dryden's Virgil, if you wish to taste the exquisite richness of these ancient authors.

Mason's poems have great merit, and have acquired him a considerable celebrity. His Caractacus, his Elfrida, and his English Garden have all been admired. Nothing, however, from his pen, has pleased me more, than the epitaph upon his lady. His talents seem to be particularly formed for the pensive and pathetic. But poetry, after all, is but an *embellishment*, and, in the character of a *divine*, a very secondary distinction. How much more important and useful to mankind, are the labors of that pastor, who by one judicious, impassioned and well directed discourse, appeals the sinner, encourages the faint, revives the drooping, guides the perplexed, or condescends to cheer the bed of sickness with divine consolations !

This remark, however, is not particularly intended to depreciate the ingenious author of Caractacus. He is said to excel likewise, as a preacher.

LETTER LX.

IN poetry, the *ladies* have, of late, asserted their claim to genius, and the trampled honors of their

understanding. Several of them appear, in the walks of Parnassus, with considerable lustre.

Miss Seward, in my idea, is a star of the first magnitude in the hemisphere of imagination. She has given us chiefly little, fugitive pieces; a monody on the death of Captain Cook, and major Andre; a poem to the memory of lady Miller, and a few stanzas to Mr. Wright, on taking her father's picture. The last always gave me the highest pleasure. It required indeed no great effort, but is a most pleasing specimen of filial affection, and of a rich, fervid, glowing imagination. Her *Louisa*, though her largest, is not, in my idea, her *happiest* performance. A novel is too much dignified by the charms of poetry. It is a courtesan, dressed like a queen.

Whenever Miss Hannah More takes up her pen, she never loses sight of piety and virtue. Her *Bleeding rock*, *Search after Happiness*, *Sir Eldred of the Bower*, *Sacred Dramas*, *Female Fables*, &c. will please and instruct you. The little tract, lately published, intitled, "*Thoughts on the Manners of the Great*," which has had so very extensive a circulation, is said to have come from her ingenious pen. The design is excellent, and the execution displays a considerable knowledge of human life and manners. I wish it may leave some lasting impressions. But alas! the dissipated have few intervals for reflection.

Miss Williams bids fair for a poetic laurel, that shall long be green. Her *Peru*, is a work of considerable merit.

The little sonnets of Miss Charlotte Smith are soft, pensive, sentimental and pathetic, as a woman's productions should be. The muses, if I mistake not, will, in time, raise her to a considerable eminence. She has, *as yet*, stepped forth only in little things with a diffidence that is characteristic of real genius in its *first* at-

tempts. Her next, public entre may be more in style, and more consequential.

The Comtesse le Genlis I have before mentioned, as a woman of a fine taste, and a cultivated understanding. Her *Theatre sur l'Education*, as founded on a dramatic plan, may be recommended amongst other poetical productions. There is not a sweeter rose in the garden of nature, than hers of Salency.

Lord Littleton was not, by any means, a capital poet. There is, however, such a delicacy, softness, piety, and tender pathos in his strains, as do the highest credit to his *own* heart, and must improve that of every attentive reader. His monody upon his Lucy has immortalized his sensibility, his affection, and his virtue.

Akenfide's work on the Pleasures of Imagination, needs no other recommendation, that what it has received from a generous and a discerning public. It is highly interesting ; it required a very considerable effort, and his genius has rendered it beautifully picturesque.

Cowper's poems are calculated to do considerable service. He has made the muses hand-maids to religion. He has chosen verses, only as a vehicle for conveying instructions of so important a nature, as would not, by any means, have dishonoured the pulpit. His style is simple, bold, manly, spirited and energetic ; his judgment, strong and penetrating ; his metaphors, forcible and happily conceived ; his observations on life and manners, accurate, and his satire, just and poignant.

He does not seem so much to have studied the production of a poem, with unity for its design, and harmony in all its parts, as to serve the cause of piety and virtue by general, desultory and impassioned reflexions. His work on the whole, is a strong specimen of genius and talents ; rigid criticism, perhaps, would say,

that his piety wants a little mildness, and seems to breathe the spirit of a party.

But the most finished poet of the age is Hayley. His Essay on History and on Epic Poetry, his Ode to Howard, and his Triumphs of Temper have received very great and very general applause.

LETTER LXI.

YOUR question is a very proper one, and I will give you the best satisfaction in my power.

Pronunciation or that part of grammar, called *Orthography*, as to any uncommon or difficult words, is governed by the quantity, which those words have in the *original* language, from which they are derived. As you cannot be supposed to understand the dead languages, you will of course, frequently, be at a loss how to pronounce many words with propriety. The only method is recourse to a dictionary, and the best in my opinion, are those of Sheridan and Johnson. Pronunciation, however, is a very fluctuating thing; and though there certainly is a standard of propriety, over which mere fashion *ought* to have no power, yet I should always recommend a conformity to the manners of the politest people you may happen to converse with, rather than a pedantic affectation of grammatical strictness. The latter would be thought a *conceited* ostentation of knowledge, which, in a young lady, would not be forgiven.

The allusions to Jupiter, Pallas, Venus, the Graces, the Muses, Helicon, Parnassus, which have so much puzzled you in the poets you have lately read, will be fully explained in Tooke's Pantheon, or History of the Heathen Gods. The *general* fact is, that before the knowledge of the true God dawned on their

minds, these poor, ignorant heathens, never dreamed of *one* omnipotent, all-sufficient, all pervading spirit, which the scriptures have revealed, and described, as possessed of all possible perfections. They, therefore, formed to themselves a *multiplicity* of gods, and attributed to one of them in particular, with a *specific* name, every great quality or superior excellence, that appeared beyond the ability of *mortals*. These deities they arranged into different classes, according to their supposed degrees of pre-eminence; and fancied some of them to inhabit the heavens, and others, the woods, groves, rivers, springs, mountains, &c.

You will be amused with their fanciful opinions; and if you think aright, you will learn to bless the Almighty, on your knees, for having cast *your* lot in an age and country, where the gospel has dispersed these mists and errors, dignified our views and nature beyond all expression, and given us the clearest knowledge of our duty. You will feel the force and propriety of that clause in our liturgy. "We bless thee for our
" creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this
" life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in
" the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus
" Christ, for the means, of grace, and for the hope of
" glory."

LETTER LXII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

A LITTLE taste for the fine arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, will be of singular use. It will render every excursion you make, and every curiosity you behold, exceedingly delightful and enable you to become entertaining to all, with whom you converse.

A person thus accomplished, surveys an elegant pile of building, the designs of a Palladio, the landscape of a Claude Lorrain, the portraits of a Titian, or the transfiguration of a Raphael, with uncommon rapture, and can entertain herself, for *hours*, with a ruin or a castle, in which the unskilful can see nothing but deformity, or the corrosions of time.

Writers on Sculpture and Architecture are not numerous, and I am wading beyond my depth, when I attempt to recommend them. Winkleman's reflexions on the sculpture of the Greeks, Evelyn's Parallel of ancient and modern Architecture, and Morris's Lectures may give you *some* ideas on the subject.

On the art of *painting*, more has been written ; yet without a natural genius for it, and some previous instructions from a *master*, I do not know whether you will be able to make any great proficiency.

Webb's Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting is a very learned, elegant, ingenious work, and interesting, in an high degree, even to those, who are, by no means, to be ranked amongst the *cognoscenti*. The quotations from Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, Boileau, Moliere, Racine, Tasso, Ariosto and Metastasio are not only well contrived to *illustrate* the subject, but to delight every person of reading and taste ; whilst the picturesque imagery and splendid language would stamp a value on any production.

I remember to have been charmed, some years ago, with reading a small work, intitled an "Essay on Prints and Picturesque Beauty." I do not recollect, whether it bore the name of any author ; but it struck me as a very interesting and valuable performance. Genius and knowledge were wonderfully united, and embellished the whole.

Ferguson's Art of Drawing in Perspective, I conceive to be useful, as an *elementary* work. An Essay on Landscape may be considered in the same light ;

and you will be instructed and delighted, at the same time, with Hayley's two epistles to Romney, and Fresnoy's Art of Painting, translated by Mason. This last mentioned author is said to excel in the three sister arts of painting, poetry and music. In the two first, he has given the *world* specimens of his skill; with the latter he is said frequently to entertain the circle of his private friends.

But the best place for gratifying your curiosity, and I should think, for improving your taste in paintings, is the annual exhibition of them, at Somerset-house. The metropolis, amidst all its variety of invention, does not furnish in my idea, a more elegant, or a more improving amusement. We see, with pride, some artists of our own country, vying with the most celebrated masters of antiquity. Under the hands of a Reynolds, a Wright, a West, and many others, the English canvass glows with inimitable beauty. A Raphael, a Titian, a Dorreggio, a Rubens, a Poussin, or a Salvator Rosa, seem, in some degree, transplanted to the British isle.

A stranger, indeed is, at first sight, so much dazzled, with the splendor and elegance of the company about him, that, in the charms of *living* beauty, he is tempted to overlook the efforts of the pencil. In no other place, that I ever saw or recollect, do art and nature so powerfully combine to bewitch the senses, and captivate the imagination.

If my time and place of residence were at my own command, I should frequently in the season, devote to this pleasure, one of those languid, afternoon hours, when the spirits are exhausted with the employments of the morning, and want renewed vigour, elasticity and animation.

I am much interested, believe me, in the relish I would give you for this species of improvement. I look forward, with a degree of pleasure, to the time,

when I may be the companion of your little tours, and delighted with your observations ;—when we may hang in curiosity, over fossils and petrefactions ; when we shall pore over paintings, buildings, ruins, with all the luxury of artists, and in such rational, innocent pleasures endeavor to forget the sorrows, that will crowd on this *variegated* life.

LETTER LXIII.

IT is so very agreeable to peruse voyages and travels into *foreign* countries by way of coming easily at a knowledge of their history, customs, ceremonies and degrees of civilization, that I do not wonder at the number and multiplicity of these productions. Authors wish to be *read*, and this is the sort of work, which, if judiciously executed, suits every taste. It has a tendency to enlarge the mind, and divest it of illiberal prejudices. Books of this kind are now become so numerous, that the difficulty only is how to make the selection.

I will begin with Moore, for he has pleased universally. Your collection will be graced by his *View of Society and Manners in France, Switzerland, and Germany*, in two volumes, and his *View of Society in Italy*, in two more.

Wraxall is another writer in this way, who has superior merit. He has published a tour through the northern parts of Europe, and through France.

Pennant has been singularly happy in all his attempts. He interests the antiquarian, the scholar and the man of genius in his various productions. His works are numerous. *A Tour through Scotland, Voyages to the Hebrides, a Tour in North Wales ; a*

Journey to Snowdon ; and a Journey from Chester to London, &c.

Switzerland is one of those, *romantic* countries, that delights us in idea. Coxe has given sketches of it, in a very pleasing and picturesque manner.

Sherlock's English Traveller is a very original and entertaining book. The author is evidently a man of fancy and genius, but rather fulsome in his panegyrics on particular characters, and eccentric both in his sentiments and manner. He will, sometimes make you smile with egotisms and the appearance of conceit ; but he will likewise enlighten your understanding.

Cordiner's Antiquities and Scenery of the North of Scotland is an entertaining work. The plates annexed to it, please the eye, and invigorate the imagination.

A tour to the lakes is become very fashionable, and is said abundantly to repay the travellers curiosity. West's description of them may be useful, though the language appears too florid and poetical.

The Tour to Ermenonville I have never seen ; but it is mentioned as possessing considerable merit. Gilpin's Description of the River Wye abounds with beautiful scenery, and is a most lively and entertaining production.

But the catalogue would be endless. A thousand other books of this kind, are at hand, whenever you are disposed to travel with them in your closet.

If you have a little knowledge of Heraldry, it will be an *embellishment* ; an agreeable exercise of your taste and ingenuity, and may, occasionally, suggest a channel, through which you may serve a valuable friend. The only books I recollect, are the Elements of it, by Porney ; Gwillim, a large folio, and Edmondson's Complete Body of it, in two volumes.

But after all this recommendation of different studies, do not mistake me. I do not want to make you

a fine writer, an historian, a naturalist, a geographer, an astronomer, a poet, a painter, a connoisseur, or a virtuoso of any kind. But I would have you to possess such a *general* knowledge, as will usefully and innocently fill up your leisure hours, raise your taste above fantastic levities, render you an agreeable friend and acquaintance, qualify you for the solid duties of your station, whatever they may be, and elevate, above all, your soul to him, who is the source of *all* knowledge, greatness and perfection.

LETTER LXIV.

THE accomplishments of a woman may be comprized under some, or all of the following articles ; needle-work, embroidery, &c. drawing, music, dancing, dress, politeness, &c.

To wield the needle with advantage, so as to unite the useful and beautiful, is her *particular* province, and a sort of ingenuity, which shews her in the most amiable and attracting point of view.—Solomon describes his excellent daughter, as employed in the labours of the distaff or the needle. Homer paints his lovely matrons as engaged in such domestic avocations. Andromache is thus relieving her solitude, when she is surprised into transport by the unexpected return of Hector from the war.

The heart glows with pleasure, when we read the accounts of the good Roman matrons in the purer and unvitiated ages of their republic. The greatest men, princes, warriors, senators and philosophers were clothed in the labours of their wives and daughters. Industry in this happy period, was esteemed a virtue, and it was not beneath a woman of the first quality or as-

derstanding to be an excellent economist, who “looked well to the ways of her household.”

Employment is the grand preservative of health and innocence. When we have nothing to do, we immediately become a *burden* to ourselves; the mind and body languish for want of exercise, and we fall into a thousand dangerous temptations.

LETTER LXV.

IF you have any *natural* taste for drawing, I should wish you to indulge it. I think it an accomplishment, very well adapted both to the taste and delicacy of your sex. It will agreeably exercise your ingenuity and invention. It will teach you to discover a superior finish in all the varied landscapes and scenery of nature; to survey the works of our distinguished masters, with an higher relish and a more poignant curiosity; and it will heighten all the innocent pleasures of your retirement. When nature howls with winds, or is covered with snow, you will be able in a moment, to call a *fantasy spring* upon the canvas, of which the blossoms will be ever fragrant, and the trees ever green. You may thus have birds always on the spray, and larks, apparently thrilling out praise to their bountiful Creator.

LETTER LXVI.

MUSIC, by which I mean playing on an instrument, or *occasionally* singing, is a very desirable acquisition in any woman, who has time and money enough to devote to the purpose, for it requires no inconsiderable portion of *both*. It will enable you to en-

ertain your friends; to confer pleasure upon *others*, must increase your *own* happiness, and it will inspire tranquility, and harmonize your mind and spirits, in many of those *ruffled* or *lonely* hours, which, in almost every situation, will be your lot.

The passions of mankind, however, have very much debased and *profaned* this art, which, like others was *originally* sacred, and intended to chant the praises of the Almighty. Many songs are couched in such *indelicate* language, and convey such a train of *luscious* ideas, as are only calculated to soil the purity of a *youthful* mind. I should therefore recommend, (if I may so express myself,) rather the *sacred*, than the *profane*, of this study. Indeed church music is, in itself, more delightful than any other. What can be superior to some passages of Judas Maccabæus, or the Messiah? There is not, perhaps, an higher amongst the *melancholy* pleasures than a funeral dirge.

Dancing, in a degree, is professedly an essential part of a good education, as correcting any *awkwardness* of gesture, giving an easy and *graceful* motion to the body, and if practised *early*, perhaps even in *directing* its growth. Modern manners, however, have carried the fondness for this accomplishment to an *immoderate* extreme. A passion for making the best figure in a minuet, is vastly beneath the dignity of a woman's understanding. And I am not sure, whether *excelling* in this particular does not inspire too great a fondness for dissipating pleasures, and proportionably abate the ardour for more retired virtues. A woman, who can sparkle and engage the admiration of every beholder, at a birth night or a ball, is not always content with the graver office of managing a family, or the still and sober innocence of domestic scenes. Besides dancing is not, at *certain* moments, without its temptations. An elegant, illuminated room, brilliant company, the enchanting powers of music, admiring

eyes, obsequious beaus, attitude, &c. are apt to transport the mind a little beyond the rational medium of gentle agitation.

I would not, however, be a *cynical* moralist, that would abridge you of any harmless amusement. I have only my apprehensions for your innocence, for indeed it is a plant of a very delicate complexion. And you will *then* have attained the perfection of your character, when you can mix a passion for these elegant accomplishments, with a turn for solid and domestic virtue; when you can, one night be distinguished at a ball, and the next want no other entertainment, than what the shade, your family, a well chosen book or an agreeable walk are able to afford. I should wish you to be *innocent*, and if *possible*, accomplished at the *same time*; but at *any* rate, I would have you *innocent*, because otherwise you cannot be happy.

LETTER LXVII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

WILL you bear with my impertinence, if I attempt to give you my directions on a subject where your sex are allowed to possess infinitely more taste and judgment than our own—that of dress. I offer, however, my plain and undisguised sentiments, only for your advantage; and I am sure you will receive them with that candour and indulgence, to which my friendship for you has an indisputable claim.

Neatness, you cannot cultivate with too much attention. I would press it on every female, as strongly, if possible, as Lord Chesterfield did the *graces* on his son. The want of it is unpardonable in a *man*, but in

a woman, it is *shocking*. It disgusts all her friends and intimates; has estranged the affections of many an husband, and made him seek that satisfaction abroad, which he found not at home.

Some ladies, who were remarkably attentive to their persons *before* marriage, neglect them *afterwards*, in an egregious manner. They cannot pay a worse compliment to their own delicacy, or to their husbands. If they conceived some efforts necessary to *gain* the prize, more, I am sure, are required to preserve it.

It is the opinion of (I believe,) Rochefoucault, that nice observer of life and manners, that the affection of woman *increases* after marriage, whilst that of man is apt to *decline*. Whatever be the *cause*, a prudent woman will, at least, use every method in her power, to guard against so *mortifying* a charge. Neatness, however, is *easily* practised, and will always have considerable weight.

In the eyes of *servants* and domestics, indeed, a woman loses her consequence and authority by a neglect of her person. She will not be obeyed with *cheerfulness*, and she will become an object of *ridicule*, in all their private parties and conversations. If inferiors must be subject, they will pay an *unconstrained* homage only to a person, who attracts by *propriety*, the estimation of the world.

Neatness is the *natural* garb of a well ordered mind, and has a near alliance with *purity* of heart. Law has said of his Miranda, that she was always clean *without*, because she was always pure *within*. And Richardson, whose taste was as exquisite, as his imagination glowing, has painted his Clarissa, as always dressed, before she came down stairs for any company, that might break in upon her during the whole day.

Finery is seldom graceful. The easy undress of a morning often pleases more, than the most elaborate and costly ornaments. I need not say of how much

time and money they rob us, which are sacred to virtue and to the poor, nor how soon this very *embellished* body will be dust and ashes. The perfection of the art is conveyed in *two* words ; an *elegant simplicity*. Ladies are certainly injudicious in employing so many *male* freifeurs about their persons. The custom is indelicate ; it is contrary to *cleanliness*, and all their manœuvres cannot equal the beauty of natural, easy ringlets, untortured and unadorned.

The nearer you approach to the *masculine* in your apparel, the further you will recede from the *appropriate* graces and *softness* of your sex. Addison, in his day, lashed, with a delicate vein of *irony*, this absurd *transformation*. The present age wants such an inimitable censor. The riding habits, particularly, that have been so fashionable, and even made their appearance at all public places, conceal every thing that is attractive in a woman's person, her figure, her manner, and her graces. They wholly *unsex* her, and give her the unpleasant air of an Amazon, or a virago. Who likes the idea ? or if you would be more struck with the *absurdity*, tell me what you would think of *petite maitres* in muffs ? You immediately despise the ridiculousness of the one ; we daily *feel* the *unnaturalness* of the other. We forget that you are *women* in *such a garb*, and and we forget to love.

Every public paper one opens, is a violation of your delicacy and an insult to your understanding. Powders, perfumes, pomatums cosmetics, essence of roses, Olympic dew, artificial eyes, teeth, hair advertised for your advantage, would be an heavy stigma, if some kind and *well disposed* persons amongst *our own sex*, were not willing to share with you a part of the burden. Blush, my dear girl, at such unseemly practices. Be content to be, what God and nature *intended* you : appear in your true colours ; abhor any thing, like *deceit* in your *appearance*, as well as your character.—What

mult all sensible men think of a woman, who has a room, filled with a thousand preparations and mixtures to *deceive* him ? What money, what time must be given to this *odious*, insufferable *vanity* ! Under such *unnatural* management, how different must be the female of the *evening* and the *morning* ! What must we think of marriage, dressing rooms and toilets ! What an opening for expostulation, coldnesses, aversions ! If an “*elementary simplicity*” be the *perfection* of dress, this is surely, as far as possible, removed from perfection. It is not *simplicity* ; it is not *elegant*.

It would be cruel to add any thing to the punishment of the *men*, who can have recourse to such *effeminate* artifices. They have *already* the scorn and ridicule of one sex, and the stern contempt and indignation of the other. They are poor, amphibious animals, that the best naturalists know not, under what class to arrange.

Painting is indecent, offensive, *criminal*. It hastens the approach of wrinkles ; it destroys constitutions, and defaces the image of your maker.

Would you think of giving the last touch to the pieces of a Poussin, or a Salvator Rosa ? Believe for a moment, that the Almighty is, at least, as great in *his* way, as either of these artists.

Let the martyrs of fashion, luxury and dissipation who turn night into day, have recourse to this filthy and abominable practice. Let them seek a resource from the rebukes of their conscience in gait and noise.

But let the fairness of *your* complexion be only that of *nature*, and let *your rouge* by the crimson blush of health, arising from temperance, regularity, exercise and air.

That beauty, truly blest, whose red and white,
Nature's own sweet, and cunning hand laid on.

Such *simplicity* will recommend you to God ;—and, if you retain any fears of offending him, how dare you deface his image, in your countenance, by *artificial* decorations. Such innocence will charm, when paint is dissolved. It will call up a bloom, and cast a fragrance even on the latest winter of your age.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

LETTERS

TO A

YOUNG LADY,

ON A VARIETY OF

USEFUL AND INTERESTING SUBJECTS:

CALCULATED TO

IMPROVE THE HEART, TO FORM THE MANNERS,
AND ENLIGHTEN THE UNDERSTANDING.

"That our Daughters may be as polished Corners of the Temple."

BY THE REV. JOHN BENNETT,

Author of Strictures on Female Education

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

To Miss LUCY ———

MY DEAR LUCY,

A WOMAN may be fairly allowed a little more attention to *ornament*, than would be pardonable in the other sex. Nature, through all her works has lavished more *external* brilliancy, colouring and plumage on the *female*. And though dress, in itself, is no *essential* quality, we are induced to judge more of your *real* character and disposition from it, than you are apt to imagine. We fancy it, in its different *modifications*, a mark of good sense, delicacy and discretion, or of the very opposite defects. Every sensible woman, therefore, will study it so far, as not to subject herself to unfavorable constructions. She will endeavor to convince every beholder, that she knows the proper *medium* betwixt a ridiculous *profusion*, and a total *want*, of ornament; that she can tissue plainness with elegance; that she does not wish to *seduce* by her appearance, but only to *please*; that she has cultivated her mind, much more than her person, and placed the highest value, not on the *outward*, perishable *casquet*, but the diamond *within*.

I rejoice that the good sense of my countrywomen has corrected some late *glaring* indecencies of dress. Young ladies should not be *too liberal* in the *display* of their charms. 'Too much *exposure* does not enhance their value. And it approaches, too nearly, to the manner of *those* women, whom they would surely think it no honour to resemble. Bosoms should throb *unseen*. 'The bouffant was an ornament of too *transparent* a kind. Wherever delicacy throws its modest drapery, *imagination* always lends inexpressible charms. As fine a woman, as the Venus of Medici, would cease to be admired, if curiosity ceased to be *suspended*.

There is a great *neatness* in the dress of quakers, and of some other sectaries, who have copied their example. It has, however, more *primness*, than ease. In this respect, you have too much good sense to affect *singularity*. Religion consists in something more *substantial*, than any *particular* modes of appearance. And there is, if I mistake not, some *conceit* and *pride*, under this prodigious, *over-acted* plainness. Many, whom these narrow minded persons would sentence, perhaps, to torments, for being elegantly dressed, have hearts that overflow with universal benevolence, and infinitely more piety and goodness, than themselves.

You know what young lady I mean by *Emelia*. I do not know a person, that dresses better. She is singularly happy in her choice of *colours*. Like her virtues they are of the soft and *shaded* kind, not the brilliant or the gaudy. I never saw her fine; but she never is *fantastic*. She is seldom splendid; but *neatness* is all her own. If she puts on only a ribbon, it is selected with all the exquisite modesty of her mind, and disposed of by the hands of taste. The graces always appear to have been in waiting for the few moments, that she ever suffers dress to take up her attention.

I very much admire the fashes, which, of late, have been so fashionable amongst young ladies. They give

me the idea of a childish simplicity, innocence and ease. These, and *flowing ringlets* are on the system of *nature*. And nature will always please.

I am sorry, however, to observe that these *girlish* ornaments should likewise have encircled the less delicate waists of some married women. There cannot be a more absurd or disgusting affectation. If I was not writing to ladies, I would be *humorous*. On such a subject, I could be *severe*. But some improper ideas might be suggested, and I will only say, that the sober, *aged* autumn, is never clad in the cheerful livery of spring.

On the whole, my dear girl, as a reasonable creature, and as a christian, never suffer yourself to be led away by an *extravagant* fondness for dress. What is finery, compared with understanding? What is splendor contrasted with reason? What is your body, but a *temporary* receptacle for an *immortal* mind? It is but the *casquet*; the *jewel* is the soul. And how very low and poor in itself is the ambition of apparel? After all our efforts, we can never make it equal the beauty of lillies, or to vie with the exquisite tints of the rose. Whatever you can spare, from such expence, to give to the poor, will be a *solid* treasure, when beauty is but dust and ashes, and when gaiety is forgotten.

LETTER II.

POLITENESS, if supposed, like Lord Chesterfield's, to be made up of *disimulation*, or to consist in a number of ceremonious attitudes or fulsome compliments, without any meaning, is ridiculously frivolous; but on the other hand, if it springs from principle, from a real desire of pleasing, and is directed to its proper ends, it is, at least, a most amiable quality, if it

does not rank in the number of the virtues. In the intercourse of life and the present state of society, this good breeding is necessary to our own peace, and to that of others. It prevents a thousand inquietudes, irritations, offences; it diffuses an innocent pleasure, and it diffuses it *every moment*. We daily converse with many persons, considerably *indifferent* to us, and from whom we expect neither services nor obligations, who, yet, have it in their power, by a rough, ungracious manner, by unguarded sayings, or speaking (as it is called) *their minds*, essentially to hurt our feelings, sour our spirits, give us a bad *head ach*, or to break our rest; there are as many, on the other hand, who look up to *us* for no *essential* favours, whom yet, in *our* turn, we may, not a little, irritate and distress, by a want of civility, by any *hauteur* or superciliousness in our looks or carriage, or a withholding of those kind attentions, which, on every principle of reason, humanity and civilization are reciprocally due from every human creature to another.

This reasoning, still more forcibly, applies to members of the *same* family; to wives and husbands; children and parents; brothers and sisters. If this kind of good breeding be ever violated amongst *them*, the consequence is coldness, quarrels, and gradual *aversion*.

So great, indeed, is the influence of true politeness over the mind, that even favours conferred in an *unpleasing* manner, *without* it, become an insupportable insult; whilst a refusal, *softens* by it, into an obligation, and is, sometimes, made the basis of a lasting gratitude, affection or esteem.

This grace may be defined the art of being easy ourselves, in company, and of making all others easy about us. It is the proper medium betwixt the total want of, and an officious, over-acted, civility. It consists in a general, *indiscriminate* attention; in doing little civil offices, and saying obliging things to all the

parties we converse with ; in accommodating ourselves, as well as the conversation to their particular tastes, habits and inclinations ; in keeping every offensive subject and idea out of view ; in never glancing at *our own* affairs, and always paying the minutest regard to those of others ; in *annihilating*, as it were, ourselves, and as studiously exalting all that are about us.

If I have not much mistaken, the best rules for it will be found in that religion, which requires us “ to love one another ; to be gentle and courteous ; to avoid offences ; to become *innocently* all things to all men ; in honour to prefer one another, and to esteem others better than ourselves.”

The *exteriors* of good breeding, such as *presenting* yourself gracefully, entering or quitting a room with ease, a proper gait, air, gesture, &c. I am not, at present, considering. *These* are only acquired by *early* education, habits of good company, or by a *general* intercourse with the world ; and though they may be wanting, I will venture to say, that the person will always please, and always be respected, who possesses only this principle *within*.

True politeness gives a *lustre* to all our good qualities. It is a sovereign *enamel* to all the virtues, and proportionably extends our power of doing good.— Learning, riches, station, talents, genius *without* it, are overbearing and insufferable, or at least may be very *awkward* and unpleasing. They resemble a rich, *unfinished* picture, thrown into a *dark* and an *unpleasant* room. Politeness gives them the last touch, raises them into a proper light, and clothes them with the most beautiful drapery.

Religion itself has often suffered for want of this grace. Good people, have not, always, been gentle, courteous or well bred, and an odium has been fixed

on their profession, which has deterred many from becoming converts,

Many bad men, on the other hand, by a *pleasing* manner, have so successfully varnished over their *vices*, as to have acquired a considerable reputation. Their crimes have been forgotten in their politeness. Can I mention a stronger argument to recommend this accomplishment? We should not, surely, for want of a little care, “suffer our good to be evil spoken of.”

LETTER III.

IT is a great unhappiness to *many* ladies of *fortune*, that they have not sufficient employment to fill up their time; and in order to prevent that, langour and *ennui*, which are the most unpleasant feelings of human life, either fall into a low state of spirits, or have recourse to play, public pleasures, or a *perpetual* round of *visits*, for their amusement.

The religious exercises, however, and the studies, I have recommended, will not only occupy *your* hours in a rational and useful manner, but *some* of them, from their very nature, will become an inexhaustible source of the purest pleasure.—Still *uniformity* in any one pursuit, however pleasing, will exhaust the spirits, and they will frequently want a relief. The eye could not *constantly* behold, without injury, the most beautiful landscape. It may, perhaps, be the privilege of *angels* and superior spirits, to serve their Maker without weariness or distraction; but a mind, united to a body of *clay*, must have very frequent intervals of *languor*, and want as many of *intermission*.

Innocent relaxation is as much a part of true wisdom, as employment itself. Indeed it is necessary to fit us for our duties. The earth itself would not be

able to vegetate and shoot forth into all the bloom and verdure of spring, if it did not regain its exhausted powers during the sombrous leisure of the winter.

The rule is, we should amuse ourselves, in order to *live*, in the true sense of the word, and not live to be *amused*. Relaxation, conducted on *this* principle, will never occupy too great a share of our time or attention. It will be consistent with the universal principle of “doing all things to the glory of God.”

A woman's amusements should, as much as possible, be *domestic* ; and her own walls will present many excellent opportunities of such a nature. The exercise of parental or filial affection is a source of *heart-felt* and refined pleasure. Intercourses of tenderness betwixt branches of the same family, and the little engaging attentions they create, stimulate the finer movements of the body and give play to all the refreshing emotions. A *mother*, in particular, must have these *natural* delights in *perfection*. Her heart must vibrate, with an exquisite fondness, to the playful graces of a little offspring, and their continually unfolding charms.

Exercise in the open air, is another great amusement. Fresh breezes, variety of objects, gentle motion, and all the charming pictures of nature cheer the mind, and invigorate the spirits. The sedentary life of women is the parent of many fashionable complaints ; weak nerves, low spirits, vapours, hysterics, languors. *No* constitution can long withstand the bad effects of luxury and inaction. Such people may *exist* but they cannot *live*.

In a rich entertainment, Mr. Addison saw fevers, dropsies, gouts and rheumatisms in embryo. Who, that looks at women, emaciated with *midnight* pleasures, and pale for want of exercise and air, must not behold the seeds of infinite disorders, and likewise tremble for the rising generation ?

The ancients paid a very nice attention to the constitution of females. To give them, in *particular situations*, every degree of firmness, was not thought beneath the attention of those great men, who by their eloquence and valour, astonished the world.

Attention to a *garden* is truly *feminine* amusement. If you mix it with a taste for botany and a knowledge of plants and flowers, you will never be in want of an excellent restorative. Our first parents are described by Milton, as tending the shrubs and flowers of their paradise, with unceasing assiduity, and as rising with the dawn to work :

Amongst sweet dew's and flow'rs, where any row
Of fruit trees over woody, reach'd too far
Their pamper'd boughs, and needed hands to check
Fruitless embraces, or they lead the vine
To wed her elm.——

There is an inexpressible *tranquility* in a garden, which soothes the spirits into that kind of cheerful pensiveness, which is, perhaps, the right temperature of the moral constitution. Our Saviour often resorted to a garden. Innocence and piety found it the happiest place for meditation and repose. It is impossible, indeed, to have a richer blessing, than a taste for the *general* beauties of nature. It is an inexhaustible fund of pleasure within *every* person's reach ; it purifies and refines the mind, and raises it above the *artificial* gaieties, which are purchased at so great an expence of time, money, and often, of *constitution*.

O blest'd of heav'n, whom not the languid songs
Of luxury, the siren, not the bribes
Of sordid wealth, nor all the gaudy sports
Of pageant honours can seduce to leave
These ever blooming sweets, which from the store
Of nature, fair imagination culls
To charm the enliven'd soul.——

Thus the men
Whom nature's works can charm, with God *himself*
Hold converse, grow *familiar* day by day
With his conceptions, act upon *his* plan,
And form to *his*, the relish of *their* souls.

But *friendship*, after all, is the great *medicine* of life. We were born for society, and the mind never so effectually unburdens itself, as in the conversation of a well chosen friend. Happy the woman who finds such a treasure! "It is more precious, than thousands of gold or silver."

Great care, indeed, judgment, taste and vigilance are absolutely necessary to direct you in the choice. A *strict* friendship is adopting, as it were, the sentiments, the manners, the morals, and, almost the *happiness* or misery of others. *Religion* should guide you on this occasion. None but a *good* person is *capable* of true attachment, and, I trust, with *you* no other would assimilate. If you can meet with such a character, who, at the same time, has a liberal and cultivated mind, you are rich indeed!

Sincere friendships are, most generally, formed at an *early* age. The heart, in this tender season, is soft and unsuspecting. It is amazing how the little tumults of life *afterwards* jostle us *against* and put us out of humor and conceit with, one another. Sensibility becomes petrified by age and observation. Ambition, avarice, and the little paltry competitions, freeze up the generous current of the soul.

LETTER IV.

PUBLIC pleasures are esteemed and called the amusements of women. But I think them far

from answering the name. In fact they *agitate*, rather than *relieve*, and are more frequently sources of vexation, than repose. Superior rivals eclipse ; fancied friends are inattentive, and the gaiety of the scene has no connection with quiet of the heart. The time, money, and *preparation* they require, are a serious consideration, and their *frequency* renders them a *business* ; instead of *preserving* health, they undermine and destroy it. Late hours, hot rooms, and an agitated mind are unfavorable to rest ; and the God of sleep will not long be defrauded of his rights, without *retaliating* the offence.

What we *call* pleasure, is but a splendid and a voluntary *service*. If it had not the *name* of amusement, we should *shrink* from it, as an intolerable burden.

Who are so great slaves as the votaries of fashion ? What requires more *systematical* diligence, than the watching of every, varying mode of dress, and “ catch-
“ ing these living manners, as they rise ?

Of *all* women, they who call themselves fashionable, are the most *unhappy* ; ever idly busy ; ever vainly agitated ; their peace depends on a whisper, on a look, or a thousand, little emulations, too ridiculous to be mentioned ! They dread a private moment more than an assassin, and with very great reason ; they cannot glance into themselves with comfort ; they cannot look into *eternity* with hope ! Reason suggests, that they were born for something higher, and there *are* moments, when *conscience* will be heard.

How unheeded are the cries and prattle of their infants ! How unhappy must be the man, who has received from such women, vows which they will not perform, of fidelity and of attachment !

After all, it is only in the practice of virtue ; it is only in *domestic* life, that lies all the *solid*, because all the *untumultuous*, joy.

LETTER V.

IT would be uncomfortable to *yourself* to live wholly alone in the midst of society ; and to *others*, it would carry the appearance of great pride, or conceit, or singularity. As we were born to be *citizens of the world*, we feel ourselves uncomfortable, when we are not in the exchange of little civilities with people about us ; and they in their turn, contract unpleasant piques and prejudices against us. Mixing with company has certainly the good effect of promoting benevolence, and preventing many little shynesses and misconstructions. Nay, even the lightest and most insignificant conversation has a tendency to relieve intense thoughtfulness, and keep the mind from preying too much upon itself.

Tea parties are the *general* mode of society, amongst ladies. And you must give into them in some degree, if *you* will cultivate *any* acquaintance with people of fortune. *Some* of your sex spend their time in a *continual* rotation of these visits, and have so many *preconcerted* engagements on their hands, as require a very orderly arrangement upon paper. But this is a most useless and insipid life ; and, where there is a *family*, cannot fail to interfere with many duties of far higher importance. The time that is taken up in *dress* alone, and the money it requires, are a prodigious sacrifice.

Nor in the light of *amusement* alone, is this *continual* visiting to be much recommended. It affords neither air nor exercise, and, frequently, not much agreeable or useful conversation. The generality of men are so much *undomesticated*, so lost to every thing, that is innocent in taste, or natural in pleasure, that *they* are but seldom to be met with in these parties. A group of beautiful females are not, unfrequently seen together, without one single person of the other sex, to share the enjoyment ; and it is, I conceive, in mixed companies

alone, that conversation has its proper *interest*, flavour or improvement.

Your visits, therefore, I trust, will be, comparatively, rare, and nicely selected; and I hope you will always preserve yourself from the reproach, that is generally thrown on these meetings, as being vehicles of gossiping and scandal. It has been objected to your sex, that they are prone to *satire*. At a certain age, and under some *disappointments*, perhaps this is true. They have been collecting, for many years, a quantity of spleen, and imprudently discharge it on every person, that falls in their way. This renders a woman *unlovely* indeed. Nay the attempt at *wit*, or saying *smart* things, is, by no means to be encouraged. *True* humour is the lot of few, and can *never* be an advantage to a woman. From *her* we expect the qualities, that please, soothe and enliven. Unfortunately they, who think themselves in possession of this weapon, are brandishing it *indiscriminately* on all occasions, so as sometimes to wound their very *nearest* friends. If you could really say the *smartest* things, you might be *feared*, but you never would be *loved*.

The *curiosity* of women is a *proverbial* object of satire, and gives birth to all that little gossiping, which I have reprobated. Never convince the world, by an attention to mere trifles, that you have so unfurnished a mind, or so little to engage it. Read Hayley's truly humorous Essays on Old Maids, and blush at the practice. Remember the fate of the poor, unhappy *spinster*, who caught her death by her immoderate curiosity.

You can surely find infinite subjects for the entertainment of an *hour*, without *descending* to these little things. If you *cannot*, it is high time to give up (what is only *called*) an amusement, for that, which is a *real* one, a walk, a ride, a book, a garden, or the society of a chosen friend.

It is astonishing into how many difficulties a woman betrays herself, who is fond of this practice ; what quarrels, misconstructions, and explanations, what secret shynesses, averfions, mischiefs fuch *babblers* create ; what friends they feparate, and what a badge of infamy they fix upon themfelves, in the eyes of ‘all the fenfible and the good !

There was a famous fchool amongft the ancients, where the pupils fpent feveral years in learning the very neceffary art of being *ſilent*. Remember, my dear girl, that nature has given you *two* ears, and only *one* tongue ; and that ſcripture has ſaid, “ be ſwift to hear, but ſlow “ to ſpeak.”

LETTER VI.

CARDS, which are the infeparable concomitants of tea viſits, and introduced as ſoon as perſons are well ſeated in company, are a very equivocal pleaſure, and, by no means, to be much recommended. Little habits inſenſibly beget a *paſſion* for them ; and a paſſion for cards murders time, money, talents, underſtanding, every thing, that is rational in our nature, and every thing, that is divine.

If experience did not convince us of the fact, one ſhould never have imagined, that a *reaſonable* creature would ever have been able to conſume hours, days, weeks, months, years, in *counting over* the black and red ſpots upon paper, and childiſhly to quarrel about their ſucceſs—a creature, who has an underſtanding, that is capable of improvement, to an infinite degree ! a creature living in a world, where knowledge is imenſe, and every flower or ſhrub a ſubject of aſtoniſh-

ment—who has a temper that requires continual watchfulness ; a soul that needs unremitting cultivation ; perhaps children, that call for incessant instruction ; amidst objects of distress, for which *heaven* begs each superfluous penny, and in a body, that may, *any moment*, drop into the grave !

I will advert, no longer, to the *moral* consequences. A woman, who has a wish only to *please*, should not be much addicted to this practice. It is very apt to ruffle the temper, and *discompose the features* ; and a sour or an angry look is more destructive to *female* charms, than an high scorbutic flush, or the small-pox.

It is said in favour of cards, that they prevent *scandal*, and are a substitute to many, for the want of conversation. This conveys a severe stigma both on our hearts and understanding. It supposes that we have few stores of entertainment *within* ourselves ; and that the only way to avoid a *greater* crime, is to fall into a *less*. Our moments I fear, will not bear the scrutiny of conscience or reason, much less of the great day, if we cannot contrive to spend them in an innocent and useful manner without the *low* resource of either *scandal* or *play* !

LETTER VII.

THE *defenders* of cards, however, will say nothing in favor of *gaming*. No fortune, they know, is equal to its extravagant demands. An unlucky throw loses thousands in a moment. It has reduced the most opulent families to indigence ; it has led some to forgery, and an ignominious death ; others, whose pride would not brook the *degradation*, to the fatal act of suicide ; at best it has plunged into poverty and distress,

many heirs of honorable and illustrious houses, who were born, in all *appearance* to *happier* days.

Your *moderate* card players (as they call themselves,) have often wondered, what can tempt people of fortune to such a dreadful and ruinous amusement, as that of gaming. I will venture to say, that this shocking practice is nothing more, than the spirit of card playing, carried to its *extreme*; that equal temptations would probably have led *them* to the very same imprudence; that they both, *generally*, originate in the same principle, (the want of something substantial to fill and exercise the mind,) and are only an *artificial* method of destroying that *ennui* and languor, which are the most insupportable feelings of human life; and that the cure of *both* must, equally, spring from solid knowledge, and from solid virtue.

Though gaming, at *first*, rises from no worse a principle, than a want of amusement, or of having something to call the passions into exercise, yet, in its *consequences*, it has a tendency to eradicate every religious and moral disposition, every social duty, every laudable and virtuous affection. It renders the mind *selfish* in the extreme, and callous to the touch of woe, in every shape; whilst it stops up the *fluices* of charity, it extinguishes the *inclination* for it; it is deaf to every call of friendship or of prudence. There can be no such thing, as an attentive parent, mother, wife, brother, sister or a sympathizing heart, where this infernal rage has taken possession of the soul. Every thing else is swallowed up in the *all-devouring* vortex. A gamester would stake the last thousand on a throw, though a *prison*, for her *husband*, *rags* for her *children*, or a *gallows* for her nearest *friend*, were the melancholy prospect!

If you disbelieve *this* reasoning, look into life. What effects has this passion *gradually* produced on women, who had *once* hearts full of tenderness and virtue, and were affected with every appearance of distress; who

had from *nature*, every refinement of taste, and every elegance of manners to captivate and charm.

If it were not invidious, I could produce many *living* characters to support my assertions. They would make a dismal picture, and the motto would be, “be-ware of beginnings.”

Though I abhor novels, yet, perhaps, the celebrated one of Cecilia is worth reading, if it was only to guard our fashionable ladies from splitting on the dreadful rock of the Harrels. Many characters, in that book, are overstrained; but *this* is borrowed from real life, and daily observation.

LETTER VIII.

LAY down a little plan for yourself, and all your studies, exercises and employments will be easy and practicable. You will have time for every thing; and you will never seem in an hurry or *embarrassed*.

Order is the first law of nature, and of nature's God. The moon, stars and tides vary not a moment, and the sun knoweth the “hour of its going down.”

Without order, a thousand things will be improperly delayed, or wholly neglected. Whilst we are hesitating where to *begin*, or *what* to do, hours fly away, *insensibly*, never to return!

If every thing knows its place, you will escape the loss of many, valuable moments, and the anxiety of as many unprofitable searches. *Exactness* is, by no means, the *necessary* appendage of an old maid.

Order is the very parent of *tranquility*. A person is always easy, whose affairs are, always, in a *regular* arrangement. At the same time, let the *mechanism* of your process be *invisible*. The perfection of art, you know, is to *conceal* it.

Be always ready to receive your friends with an open countenance, and a cheerful heart. Society and connection have claims upon us, to which we should sacrifice every *selfish* consideration.

If you are an *early riser*, you may find time for *every* thing. It is amazing how much is gained by lopping off an hour or two, from indulgence in the *morning*. Nor is the mere saving of time the only advantage. Our spirits are more lively, and our faculties are more awake.

I do not know a practice which I should *more* recommend, whether devotion, health, beauty, or improvement of the mind, were the objects in view. How cheerful and how animated are the meditations of the morning! What a delightful bloom flushes into the cheeks from its balmy exhalations! What an unspeakable cheerfulness glides into the soul from hearing the devotional matins of the lark, and from beholding the new-born scenery of nature! How necessary is such a regimen to preserve that sweetness of complexion, and of breath, which are the very essence and perfume of beauty! When people think of accounting to God for the talents, they have received, they overlook the hours, which are lost in morning sloth, and *unreasonable* indulgence.

I have inured myself, for many years, to this habit of early rising. In the spring months of April and May, particularly, I grudge every moment that is wasted after five. I consider it as a rude neglect to all those sweets, which opened to salute me. And I always find so much more deducted from the firmness of my health, and the vigour of my understanding.

LETTER IX.

I HAVE indeed, as you say, frequently dwelt with pleasure on Miss Louisa —, and do think her a charming woman. She always struck me as possessing, in a superior degree, those qualities, which constitute the *graceful and attractive*, and therefore as a very proper pattern to all young people. Not that I think a servile imitation of *any* original, however excellent, would render *another* pleasing. Nature no more intended any two persons to have precisely the same *manner*, than the same eyes, or features, or complexion. But still a *familiar* intimacy with such a woman must *insensibly* communicate some traits of resemblance, which by incorporating with the *general* mass of a character, will form a beautiful and consistent whole.

Though I have always admired her *only* in the *gross*, and was charmed, without considering the constituent principles of her excellence, I will as you request it, endeavour to *analyze* and trace them to their source.

Her person is rather *genteel*, than beautiful, so that she is more indebted to herself, than to nature, for her attractions. And a wonderful energy indeed they have. For I have often seen this girl steal the notice of the whole company from others of her sex, who were infinitely more distinguished by the beauty of their persons, as well as the advantage of birth and fortune.

The *ground work* of all her charms, is, (what I cannot call by a better name, than that of) simplicity; an artless, undesigning, *unstudied* manner, flowing from an innocent and virtuous heart, which, never seeks *concealment*, as having indeed *nothing* to conceal. Louisa never affects to be any thing, but what she *is*. She does not *exalt* herself above measure, nor ever ridiculously degrades herself, in order to be *exalted*. Her *estures*, attitude, voice, pronunciation are all under

the immediate impression and guidance of *nature*. Louisa *expresses* an innocent pleasure, because she *feels* it in the company of sensible and agreeable men, and yet never seeks it with an improper avidity. She never harangues upon, or vaunts a *superior* sensibility, but frequently displays no *inconsiderable* share of it, by *involuntary* emotions. She never, in any respect, affects connections, appearance or any thing *above* her fortune, nor endeavours to shine at the expence of others.

This, though very imperfectly described, is, according to my idea, the first excellence in the character of this lady. It is the very reverse of that absurd affectation, which, by assuming a thousand, *fanciful* shapes, renders graces unlovely, and even beauty disgusting. Louisa charms every person because she is *always* amiable and obliging without *studying* to charm. Her face is always welcome in company, though she throws no *artificial* lightning into her eyes, softness into her features, nor *lisping* into her articulation.

The common *systematic* education of girls is unfavourable to this simplicity. The tendency of *modern* culture is to raise art, upon the ruins of nature. Such a method would not succeed in any thing *else*, and how should it in the treatment of women? If there be one object in the world, more disgusting than all others, it is a girl, whom nature formed to be innocent and artless, reducing affectation and disguise to a *system*.

It is with simplicity of manner, as it is with ease of style, in a writer. When we read his works, it appears the most *easy* attainment imaginable; but, in fact, nothing is so *uncommon*, either in conduct or in writings. And the reason must be, that, instead of attending to the guidance of nature people make an extraordinary effort to be something *great*, or *superior*, and uncommon. Simplicity may be styled the easy and the

graceful *negligence* of conduct, yet, as in dress, it charms more than the most elaborate ornaments.

Through all the wonderful works of God there is a majestic simplicity. Nature knows no *affectation*. Her prospects, hills, vallies, alcoves, grottos are all unstudied ; her magnificence is wild and artless. There is a simplicity of design and effect in all her wonders, in the construction and revolution of planets, in the flow and ebbing of the tides, and in the vomiting of immense volcanos. The carnation never aims at the stately magnificence of the ostentatious hoary oak. Every rose is content with its own natural hues and odours ; and affects not the elegant sweetness of the Reseda, (minionette.)

Nature is the standard of *perfection*. Every character and every art is only so far finished, as it approaches to her likeness. No paintings are beautiful without this ground-work of *simplicity*. It charms in a Correggio. It was the excellence of a Raphael. It lives in the exquisite touches of a Reynolds.

The beauty of all *writing* is founded in simplicity. It was with Homer, Virgil and Milton, when they sketched out their inimitable poems. Of Shakspeare it was the very soul. Statuaries, sculptors, architects have only gained an extensive reputation, in proportion as they have studied this *divine* simplicity.

No woman can be graceful without it. It will go further, in the art of pleasing, without *any* accomplishments, than *all* the accomplishments will go, without it.

LETTER X.

ANOTHER striking quality in Louisa, is her constant *cheerfulness*. Though few women in

the world are more serious or thoughtful, where any *solid* duties are concerned, where the health, peace, comfort, convenience of her friends and parents, or any *domestic* attentions are at stake, and though she is possessed of such an exquisite sensibility, as is apt to produce an unevenness of spirits, yet, whenever I see this lovely girl, she always beguiles me into a *temporary* cheerfulness, by the force of her own. This gaiety of heart, equally removed from a thoughtless levity or a moping gloom, is a most desirable quality in women. *Men* are perplexed with various anxieties of business and ambition, and are naturally more thoughtful, profound, and melancholy ; women certainly were formed to *sooth and to enliven*. It is one of the greatest blessings we derive from their society, and from the most sacred of all connections.

Cheerfulness (saith the wise man) doeth good, like a medicine. It has a wonderful effect on all the finer organs of the body. If it was not for little innocent fallies of this kind, it would be impossible to bear severe application. The year would be insupportable, if it was wholly composed of the dark and gloomy days of November.

There are many *unavoidable* ills, sicknesses and misfortunes in human life, which will come *uncalled* to deject our spirits, and poison our repose ; but we should not *anticipate* them by gloomy apprehensions, nor ever suffer an *unnecessary* melancholy to sit upon our looks. It is the truest policy to be *innocently* gay and cheerful, whilst we *can*. It forbids the approach of wrinkles, and adds many years to the little fleeting span of human life. Some pietists have encouraged gloom by their erroneous notions of the Deity, and of christian self-denial. But I should strongly suspect their goodness, or their judgment. If *any* thing can make a person truly cheerful, it should be a *good conscience*. And true religion is doubly charming, when it wears a *smile*.

A melancholy countenance is, by no means, *feminine*. It is as remote from the true point of gracefulness, in the sex, as ill-natured wit, or ironical pertness.

LETTER XI.

THOUGH Louisa is the most remote from *prudery*, of any woman I know, easy and accessible to the other sex, and cheerful, lively and *unconstrained*, in her conversation with them, yet she has really so great a share of *true*, female delicacy, that the most licentious man living would not dare to use a double *entendre* in her company, or give the conversation an improper turn. Nor is it, that she has reduced rules of propriety to a system. She has really a *native* feeling, which vibrates to the most distant touch of what is proper and becoming, and would tremble, like the sensitive plant, where any thing, that could stain the delicacy of her *mind*, was conveyed in the most *distant* allusion.

Fashionable manners have been long attempting to banish delicacy, as a sort of *incumbrance* ; but no woman will ever *long* be lovely without it. Let France or Italy do what they will, it is that sacred, fence, which is never broken down, without melancholy consequences. Delicacy is a very general and *comprehensive* quality. It extends to every thing, where woman is concerned. Conversation, books, pictures, attitude, gesture, pronunciation, should all be under its salutary restraints. If a girl ever loses it, farewell, a long farewell to all her greatness ! If this "salt have "lost its flavour wherewith shall it be seasoned ?"

How unfit are many parents to educate a daughter ! What injudicious pleasantries do they sometimes use,

even in their presence ! A girl should *bear*, she should *see*, nothing, that can call forth a blush, or even stain the *purity* of her mind.

Another distinguishing grace of Louisa is *softness*. She is (what *nature* intended her to be,) *wholly* a woman. She has a quality, that is the direct opposite to *manliness* and *vigour*. Her voice is gentle ; her pronunciation delicate ; her passions are never suffered to be *boisterous* : she never talks politics : she never foams with anger : she is seldom seen in any *masculine* amusements : she does not practise *archery*. I will venture to prophesy, that she will never canvass for votes at an election. I never saw her in an *unfeminine* dress, or her features, discomposed with play. She *really* trembles with the apprehension of danger. She feels, *unaffectedly*, for every person, exposed to it. A friend, leaving her father's house, only for a short time, calls forth her concern. The farewell tear stands big in its transparent sluice. And whenever he returns, the easy, *undissembled* smile testifies her joy. She displays more sympathy for the *indisposition* of a *servant*, than some do for the *death* of their nearest *friends*.

Of all the women I ever saw, Louisa has the most universal and indiscriminate *affability*. She never meets any poor persons in her neighbourhood, without entering into a very minute inquiry about the health of their children, family and friends ; and the villagers *revere* her, they know that she is constantly planning for them some assistance and relief.

Little minds endeavour to support a consequence by *distance* and *hauteur*. But this is a mistake. *True* dignity arises from condescension, and is supported by noble actions.

Superciliousness is almost a certain mark of low birth, and ill breeding. People, who have just emerged into greatness, think it necessary to maintain their

superiority by a proud look and an high stomach. The consequence is *general* hatred and contempt.

In fact this proud, *high-bearing* reserve is a very great *crime*. Every person, that bears the image of his Maker, is entitled to our attentions, and indeed our benevolence. Inferiority is, of *itself* a sufficient burden, without our endeavouring to *aggravate* it by ill-nature or neglect.

I have often heard Louisa dwell, with rapture, on the entertainment and *edification* she has received in many *cottages* when she has been carrying clothing, cordials or money to the distressed inhabitants; and tell me which is the more dignified character? a woman, who would turn from her poor neighbours with disdain, or one, who for her kindness and attention to them, is praised, as often as her name is mentioned, and followed, whithersoever she moveth, with their tears and with their blessings.

There is not a greater charm in any character, than such a *condescension*. A woman, thus forgetting all her distinctions, to sympathize with the unfortunate, must captivate every man, who has either a single grain of piety or understanding. Even the *plainest face* would be forgotten in such real and unaffected goodness.

The *manner* of Louisa *finishes* her character. It is a beautiful bordering to all her graces and her virtues. It is impossible for me to define, (what I mean by,) manner; yet no one can be, half an hour, in the company of this lady, without feeling its astonishing effects. Though she frequently says nothing, but what might have dropped from any other person, yet in *her* it becomes so very interesting, as to command attention, and even to delight. She embellishes, in a wonderful manner, a look, a gesture, an attitude, nay even silence itself. She confers a grace on the most *common* civility. She heightens every favour by the *mode* of doing it, and she obliges, almost, by *refusal*.

The best definition I can give of this quality must be imperfect. I should call it, however, a quick discernment of what is graceful, directed by an exquisite sensibility, and saying in an instant, to airs, gestures, features, looks, come with corresponding energy, and they “come.” No rules can be laid down for its attainment. Nature must have been propitious, where it is seen in any high perfection.

Manner is more engaging, than the most finished beauty. The latter is an agreeable prospect, that soon grows insipid, and fatigues by *uniformity*. The first is a continual change of country, with landscapes ever new, interesting and delicious.

LETTER XII.

THE father of Louisa is one of the most worthy clergymen, I ever knew, and has long lived in my esteem. He married, early in life, a woman of considerable beauty and fortune, but infinitely more distinguished by her *piety* and *understanding*. He has learning and goodness enough to have graced the highest stations in the church ; but he suffers not ambition to disturb his tranquility, and prefers the silent pleasures of retirement to all the pomp and splendour of a court. He is rector of a small parish in the county of —, and has such a pastoral tenderness and affection for his flock that I do not think he would be tempted to leave them for any temporal considerations whatsoever. “ I would not resign (he has frequently said to me) the fragrant shrubs and plants that encircle this little cot for the most enviable promotions ; nor should the tumults and anxieties of the highest station deprive me of those *domestic* endearments, which

“ after all its bewitching gaiety and bustle, are the only
 “ real sweetness of life. What could equal the heart-
 “ felt joys I derive from the fond and ever *growing*
 “ attachment of my Harriet, or the pleasure of watch-
 “ ing the continually expanding graces and improve-
 “ ments of my lovely girl ?”

It has, long, been my private opinion, that a good clergyman is more likely to have a dutiful and affectionate family, than a person of almost any other character. And I am not a little confirmed in it by the instance before us.

Whoever sees this happy pair, is delighted with that mutual esteem and fondness, which revolving years have not been able to diminish, but only to mature ; and must form a very high idea of that union, which the *licentious* only endeavour to ridicule, because they have not taste and innocence enough for its *unpurchased*, and refined sweets. I have lately spent a few days with this amiable group, and returned, quite disgusted with my own situation. It appeared, uncommonly *solitary and insipid*. I began to blame my books, as the obstacle of my felicity, and to ask philosophy and cold-hearted prudence, what joy they had to boast, if compared with these *natural* transports of the soul.

Fortunately for my friend, a comfortable, *paternal* fortune, in conjunction with that, which he received with his lady, has placed him in very easy, and rather affluent, circumstances. Providence has crowned their virtuous friendship only with Louisa ; but indeed, in her alone, has rained down a *profusion* of its blessings. In her, therefore, all their cares and anxieties center ; and her education, you may well suppose, has not been neglected.

Her parents are both averse to boarding schools, as inspiring a young person with improper notions, and undermining the taste for pure simplicity and domestic worth. She has, therefore, been always kept under

their own, immediate inspection ; but her hours are as strictly arranged, as they could have been, at any school, into a *regular* plan of employment. She has her allotted intervals for domestic duties, needle-work, reading, correspondence, exercise and recreation ; and every hour knows its particular engagement.

She opens every morning, and closes every day with an hymn of praise to her bountiful Creator, which is chanted to the harpsichord, with so sweet a voice, as I cannot even at this distance of time, recollect without emotion.

If you saw the beautiful *fancy-work*, which has been wrought by this girl, in carpets, baskets of flowers, embroidery, &c. you would imagine, that she could have but little leisure for the improvement of her understanding. But a strict *economy* of time, an invariable adherence to *order*, and an habit of *early rising* have enabled her to do wonders. Her father superintends that part of her education, which is connected with books ; and has such an happy method of conveying his idea as wonderfully mixes instruction with delight.

Natural history and botany, on fine days, they study in the *fields* ; and when the weather is less favourable, she has such a collection of animals, insects, and other curiosities as would adorn the museum of a connoisseur. This is called her grotto ; and is placed in a shady part of the garden, over-arched with an alcove of entwined elms.

History, in the hands of her able instructor, becomes a fund of unspeakable improvement. When events are recorded, she is asked what *causes* gave them birth ; what *instruments* were made use of for their completion, and what traces she can discover, of a wonderful and an all-wise Providence, governing the whole.

Geography and chronology are inseparable guides consulted on the occasion ; and when *characters* are described, she is interrogated concerning the *praise*-

worthy or the *reprehensible*, in them ; where the historian has been too sparing of his praise, or extolled beyond the bounds of reason and of *truth*. Her sentiments, on all these subjects, are given, in her own language, upon paper ; and afterwards corrected by the mature judgment and critical taste of her incomparable tutor.

On *Sundays*, she prepares a concise abridgment of the sermon, which undergoes the same rigid examination ; and she has a little volume, filled with such sacred reflections, as would not dishonour the understanding, or the repository of a professed divine.

You would suppose from *this* account, that Louisa would appear (what the world calls,) a very *learned woman*. No such thing. In a *mixed* company, you would not discern, that she possessed any superior knowledge or advantage over her sex, except in an elegant mode of expression. She enters into other people's views, feelings, interests and concerns, with a politeness, that very few possess ; and converses with all her country neighbours, on such easy terms, as banish every unpleasant feeling of distance or restraint.

The heart of this lovely girl is, all over, *sympathy and softness*. The big tear trembles in her eye, on every trying occasion ; and in her closet, along with a small, but well chosen collection of books, she has a little box, with this inscription, " sacred to the poor." Into *this*, she puts, every night, before she sleeps, something to be a fund for merit and distress. She enriches it with the savings she has made, by retrenching some expensive articles of dress or pleasure. It is filled with money, that others would have spent on plays, concerts or assemblies ; and I will venture to say, that she has infinitely sweeter music in her heart, and a more innocent, sparkling brilliance in her eyes, than any of the most admired frequenters of these gay amusements.

LETTER XIII.

FROM Louisa's strict confinement and *systematic* life you would conclude, perhaps, that she had almost contracted a *disrelish* for books. But, indeed, it is far otherwise ; her studies are her *pleasure* ; they are so judiciously mixed with entertainment, and so interwoven, as it were, with the common casual occurrences of the day, that she considers them more as an *amusement*, than a *business*. Her private moments, when she is left to her own choice, are not unfrequently beguiled with the very same employments, which had engrossed the other parts of the day.

The garden is the scene, where she indulges all the luxury of her taste ; and her rambles into it are as frequent, as the great variety of her avocations will permit. One day, I found her in this retirement. The place was very happily fancied. Large clumps of trees, on both sides, with their intervening foilage, had rendered it impervious to any human eye. Nature had wantoned with particular luxuriance. A clear, transparent spring murmured through the valley. And it was fenced, on both sides, with a very lofty mound, cast up as on purpose, and plantéd with perennial shrubs. A shady arbour, in the middle, catching through a beautiful vista, the spire of the village church, invited to meditation and to repose. She was reclined here rather in a pensive attitude, reading Burke's *Essays on the Beautiful and Sublime* ; and to me she appeared, I must confess, more enchanting, more *beautiful* and more *sublime*, than the admired work of that well known and admired author.

On another occasion, her mother being much indisposed, she had stolen from the domestic circle to indulge, at leisure, a solitary grief. The book she held in her hands, was Lord Lyttleton's *Dialogues of the*

Dead. The soft melancholy visible in her countenance, the very apparent agitation of her spirits, and the grief bursting through her animated eyes, formed a very interesting whole ; whilst her observations on a future life, on the comfort she derived from the hope of conversing with her friends after death ; on the probable nature and happiness of heaven, and the permanency of virtuous friendship and affection, would not have disgraced any divine or philosopher of the age.

A *third* time of her elopement, she was reading the only novel which she permits herself to read, that of Sir Charles Grandison. Tears, like an April shower, tinged with the sun, were mingled with her joy.

The book was opened, where the once-amiable Harriet Byron is *now* Lady Grandison ; where the painful suspense of her virtuous, though premature, attachment, is crowned by an eternal union with its object, and she is kneeling to her ever-venerable grandmother, to implore a blessing. “Heavens!” (said she,) “what
“an exquisite and inimitable painter was Richardson!
“How overwhelmed with admiration, esteem and
“self-annihilation do I, always, feel myself, when I
“read the description of his Harriet Byron. So much
“piety, yet so much cheerfulness ; such filial duty,
“tenderness, affection, so exquisite a sensibility ; so
“deep and glowing a passion, conducted with so
“much delicacy ; such beauty of person, lost in so
“much greater sweetness of temper, and such a winning candour and openness of heart, complete my
“idea of every thing that is noble and amiable in woman.
“man.

“I never read this writer without weeping. He
“had an amazing talent for the pathetic and descriptive. He opens all the sluices of tenderness, and
“tears flow down our cheeks, like a river. And
“ (what is most of all,) I never open his book without
“feeling my sentiments elevated and sublimed, and

“ my heart more alive to all the suggestions of piety
 “ and virtue. If *all* novels had been written on such
 “ a plan, they would, doubtless, have been very excel-
 “ lent vehicles of wisdom and goodness.”

The *last* time I broke in upon Louisa's retirement, she was *surrounded* with authors. She seemed bent upon indulging her elegant taste, in all its extravagance.

Addison's papers on the Pleasures of Imagination ; several pieces of Miss Seward : Mason's English Garden ; Ariosto, with Hoole's Translation, and Webb's Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting, together with a Collection of Poems, lay, in promiscuous dignity, beside her. She has accustomed herself to enter into a sort of common-place book, passages, which she thinks particularly striking. I am happy in being able to give you a little specimen of her choice, for she indulged me with a sight of the valuable manuscript.

The first, poetical rose she had plucked, was from the Italian poet, Ariosto. It was his beautiful picture of Alcina, the enchantress. I will transcribe a few of the lines, and the translation, though a modest blush tinged her cheeks, whilst I read the description.

Di persona era tanto ben formata,
 Quanto me finger san pittori industri,
 Con bionda chioma lunga ed anodata ;
 Oro non è, che piu risplenda e lustri.
 Spargeasi per la guancia delicata
 Misto color di rose, e di ligustri.

Her matchless person every charm combin'd,
 Fam'd in th' idea of a painter's mind.
 Bound in a knot, behind her ringlets roll'd
 Down her fair neck, and shone like waving gold ;
 Her blooming cheeks the blended tints disclose
 Of lillies, damask'd with the blushing rose, &c. &c.

From Lord Lyttleton's monody on his lady, she had copied the following pathetic verses. Whilst I read them, she appeared amazingly affected.

O shades of Hagley, where is now your boast?
 Your bright inhabitant is lost;
You she preferr'd to all the gay resorts,
 Where female vanity might wish to shine,
 The pomp of cities and the pride of courts:
 Her modest beauties shunn'd the public eye:
 To your sequester'd dales,
 And flow'r-embroider'd vales,
 From an *admiring* world she chose to fly.
 With nature there retir'd and nature's God,
 The silent paths of wisdom trod,
 And banish'd ev'ry passion from her breast,
 But those, the gentlest and the best,
 Whose holy flames, with energy divine,
 The virtuous heart enliven and improve,
 The *conjugal* and the *maternal* love.

Sweet babes, who, like the little, playful fawns,
 Were wont to trip along those verdant lawns,
 By your delighted mother's side,
 Who *now* your infant steps shall guide?
 Ah! where is now the hand, whose tender care
 To ev'ry virtue would have form'd your youth,
 And strew'd with flow'rs the thorny ways of truth,
 O loss beyond repair!

O wretched father left *alone*
 'To weep their dire misfortune and thy own!
 How shall thy weaken'd mind, oppress'd with woe,
 And drooping o'er thy Lucy's Grave,
 Perform the duties, that you *doubly* owe!
 Now she, alas! is gone
 From folly and from vice, their helpless age to save?

Mrs. Carter's celebrated Ode to Wisdom always makes one thrill with a melancholy pleasure, and it had furnished Louisa with these beautiful stanzas:

Thy breath inspires the poets song,
 The patriot's free, unbiass'd tongue,
 The hero's gen'rous strife;
 Thine are retirement's silent joys,
 And all the sweet, endearing ties
 Of still, domestic life.

No more to fabled names confin'd
 To thee, supreme, all-perfect mind,
 My thoughts direct their flight :
 Wisdom's thy gift, and all her force
 From thee deriv'd, unchanging source
 Of intellectual light.

O send her sure, her steady ray
 To regulate my doubtful way
 Through life's perplexing road ;
 The mists of error to control,
 And, through its gloom, direct my soul
 To happiness and good.

Beneath her clear, discerning eye
 The visionary shadows fly
 Of folly's painted show ;
 She sees through ev'ry fair disguise,
 That all, but virtue's solid joys
 Is vanity and woe.

Miss Seward's poetical address to Mr. Wright, engaged in taking her father's picture, had supplied her with these four most interesting and pathetic lines :

O when his* urn shall drink my falling tears,
 Thy† faithful tints shall shed a soft relief,
 Glow, with mild lustre, o'er my darken'd years,
 And gild the gathering shades of filial grief.

The ever graceful and elegant Fontaine, so justly esteemed the Correggio of poetry, had supplied her with the fables of *Le Chene et le Roseau*, *La Fille* ; and from the theatre *Sur l' Education* of the Comtesse le Genlis, she had stolen the fragrant rose of Salency.

From a judicious arrangement of these separate sweets, she had composed a very elegant *bouquet* which casts a delicious *fragrance* on her character and virtues.

And now, tell me, what think you of Louisa ? If she was married to the first sovereign of Europe, would she not be the richest jewel in his crown ?

* Her father's.

† Wright's.

LETTER XIV.

I WILL now give you another picture. It is that of a young lady, whom I have lately had the honor of seeing, just arrived from a *boarding school*. It is Lady Harriet ———. But I will not undertake to say, that the features will please you. They are certainly different from those of Louisa.

She was almost incessantly practising little arts, and adjusting all her airs and graces to engage admiration. When she spoke, she minced her syllables, and when she *looked*, she threw an *unnatural* vivacity into her eyes. She is a fine blooming girl; and, if she had not taken such uncommon *pains* to please, must necessarily have charmed every beholder.

How long will it be before people learn, that nothing engages so much, as the ease of nature? An artless *simplicity* is the highest charm. Whatever *studies* admiration, raises disgust. System and constraint destroy *ease*. And ease is the parent of all the graces.

It is the business of education to lop off some little *luxuriant* boughs from the tree of nature, but not to *constrain* it, that it cannot vegetate, or give to every branch, an *unnatural* direction. I should prefer the plain, honest awkwardness of a mere, country girl to over-acted refinement.

Though Lady Harriet ——— is not yet fourteen years old, she has more than the airs and forwardness of a woman. Who can have taught this girl, that roses are expected to open *all at once*, and not by degrees?

Timidity and diffidence are the most attracting qualities of a girl; a countenance always modest, and undesigning; a tongue, often silent, and ears, always attentive.

Boarding schools, it should seem, may be compared to *hot-beds*. They bring fruits and flowers quickly to their growth. But they have not their proper essence, healthiness or flavour.

The *girl's* state is so pleasing, in itself, that we wish not to see it exchanged, before its time, for the caution, the artifices, or the subtil policy of age.

It is desirable, that a girl should retain, as long as possible, the innocent dress, manners, habit and sentiments of childhood. She will never be more captivating, when she is a woman. Natural, *untortured* ringlets, *salles*, frocks, &c. are superior to all the laboured trappings of fashion. Nature has given to every *age*, as well as to every *season* of the year, its *appropriate* charms. We should be greatly disappointed, if the soft breezes and the pleasing, new-born scenery of the spring were impatient to dissolve into the sultry heats of summer.

A *forward* girl always alarms me. Indelicacy, imprudence and improper connections start up to my view. I tremble for her friends, and see her history, *gradually*, unfolding into indiscretion.

Children are apt enough, of *themselves*, to aspire into womanhood. A governess should *check* this spirit, and nip it in the bud. A long nonage, if I may so call it, is favourable to your sex. During *this* period, a girl is acquiring some *solid* improvement. When she fancies herself a woman, company, pleasures and conversation with the other sex, *unbinge* her mind, and bid unquiet thoughts take possession of her fancy.

I could discover from the conversation of Lady Harriet, that she was deeply read in novels and romances. Her expressions were beyond nature, turgid and overstrained, where she only wished to convey a *common* idea.

A *volume* would not be sufficient to expose the dangers of these books. They lead young people into an *enchanted* country, and open to their view an *imaginable* world, full of inviolable friendships, attachments, ecstasies, accomplishments, prodigies, and such visionary joys, as never will be realized in the *coarseness* of com-

mon life. The romantic turn, they create, indisposes for every thing that is *rational* or *substantial*. They corrupt all *principle*. Fortitude they unnerve, and substitute, in its place, a *sickly* sensibility, that cannot relish *common* blessings or *common* things; that is continually wounded with its own fancies, and even "ready to expire of a rose, in *aromatic* pain." Their *sentiment* is but a fine-spun word for *indelicate* emotions. Their *sympathy* and *friendship* are often but a specious, flimsy covering for *criminal* attachments. Such false, overstrained ideas have led many a poor girl to ruin. Under the notion of *superior refinement*, *similarity of souls*, and *involuntary friendship*, she has gradually been seduced from the paths of virtue, to the commission of the grossest crimes. A fine, splendid idea has been used to palliate the dreadful action. *Sentiment* has triumphed over the *vulgar* shackles of conscience, and of every social and moral obligation.

Plays, operas, masquerades, and all the other fashionable pleasures have not half so much danger to young people, as the reading of these books. With *them*, the most delicate girl can entertain herself, in *private*, without any censure; and the poison operates more forcibly, because unperceived. The most profligate villain, that was bent on the infernal purpose of seducing a woman, could not wish a symptom, more favorable to his purpose, than an imagination, inflamed with the rhapsodies of novels.

Lady H—— betrayed great *pride*, in disavowing any acquaintance with some young ladies, at the same school, because their parents were not equal to hers in point of fortune. She had formed, poor girl! wrong notions of importance; and they had not, it should seem, been properly corrected.

Under the idea of teaching young people, what is due to their rank, boarding schools encourage pride *by a system*. Whoever consults the *happiness* of a daugh-

ter, should, as *systematically*, endeavor to propagate humility.

Alas ! my dear girl, what have any of us to boast of ? What dignity is there in an heap of money, unless it be devoted to charitable actions ? To be carried in state, to eat *deliciously*, or to sleep *on down*, may have something in it, to *weak mortals*, that elevates and charms ; but to an inhabitant of heaven, or to superior spirits, must be as frivolous, as the toils or little play things of children appear to *us*.

What supreme importance does it give to a *rational* creature, that the silk worm has spun for her a robe of elegance, or that the millener has bespangled her with ornaments ? These ornaments, alas ! cover only a "poor worm," a sinner ! a creature, subject to innumerable infirmities and sorrows ! and after all, the peacock has more gaudy plumage, and flowers of the field are more beautifully decked !

Where again is the dignity of high birth, unless it leads to *dignified* conduct ? And what are all these distinctions to a creature, that, *any instant*, may be stripped of every thing ; that may die any hour ; and must be called to a very severe account, if they have not been religiously improved ? -

If you are ever disposed to be proud, look forward to the moment, which will bury, along with you, in the *dust*, titles, honours, riches, beauty, friends, connections—to the moment, when the world will be shrivelled into atoms—when you must stand, a naked and unprotected criminal, before the supreme Majesty of heaven ; and endeavour to acquire that universal love, which, for the sake of doing a religious action, is content to "become the servant of all." This love will be a sovereign balsam to the soul. It will heal a thousand disorders, and *prevent* as many more.

'The Author of all wisdom and greatness was "meek" and lowly in heart." He, who could have *commanded* kingdoms, inhabited a cottage. Humility is the *distinguishing* badge of his religion. And, whenever you are his *real* disciple, you will not exalt yourself above the meanest creature, but under an accumulation of all worldly distinctions, will smite upon your breast with the publican, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Happiness and *pride* are absolutely incompatible. Continual vexations, *fanciful* slights and injuries and provocations wound the *self-sufficient* mind.

Pride is contrary to every thing, that *pleases* in a woman. It has no softness, no benignity, no ease. The apostle has *justly* called "a meek and quiet spirit, "an ornament." It is the robe, in which a woman should always be dressed, who wishes to secure a permanent esteem.

LETTER XV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I GAVE you a description of the *true* delicacy of Louisa. I have lately seen it over-acted by *another* person, in such a manner, as to disgust me beyond expression. The virtues and graces have all their limits. If pushed further, they degenerate into the very opposite defects. The lady, who hurt my feelings, had not *considered* this maxim. Or she had not taste and sense enough to apply it. *Her* delicacy was absolute *prudery* and *affectation*.

True delicacy is nothing more, than the refinement of *modesty*. It is the sensitive plant of woman, which gives the quickest notice of approaching danger, and

trembles at the bare *apprehension* of any thing, which can injure her honor, her safety, or repose. So amiable in itself, one cannot wonder, that every female wishes to be thought in possession of it. But it is a shy and timid plant, and least displays itself, where it is known to exist in the highest cultivation.

Some women are so *over-loaden* with this virtue, as to be almost insufferable in society; so *outrageously* virtuous, that they render all their purity and principles suspected.

This *tremblingly* modest female, in a company, of which I had lately the honor of making one, on hearing that a number of gentlemen were coming to drink tea, seemed very much alarmed, and pretended to make an apology for retiring. Now this was nothing less than downright *hypocrisy*. If it had been possible to look into her heart, probably, at the very moment, it was thrilling with joy, for the agreeable information.

Every woman in the world is fond of our society, unless she had formed some *particular* attachment, and wishes to indulge the greater luxury of solitary recollection. It is a *natural* and an innocent pleasure, and it would be the *falsest* delicacy to disown it. We always *suspect* these prudes. We fancy, that their modesty diminishes in private, in proportion, as it appears to dilate and to magnify itself, before the public inspection.

Upon hearing, again, that a young lady had been smart and lively with a gentleman of her acquaintance, she *blest her stars*, and wondered, how such forwardness escaped *reprobation*! Now this girl acted from *nature*. The gentleman was agreeable. She felt the pleasure. She dared to express it. She wished to entertain him, and she did right. The other blamed her from envy or from affectation.

These *over-nice* and *over-virtuous* people would do well to consider, that an odious restraint would banish all the sweets of an intercourse betwixt the sexes, and

fix a moping and a dismal gloom on the face of the creation. It is no breach of true delicacy to comply with the innocent dictates of *nature*. A woman may, very modestly, avow a virtuous attachment. She may express an approbation of particular men, and do justice to their merit. She may shew a fondness for being in their company. She may chat, in a sociable and an easy manner with them; nay she may think of being a *wife* or a *mother*, without injuring the finest tints of this laudable quality. Providence intended her for such circumstances and connections, and they need not a *blush*.

That *piety* is most solid, which affects no gloomy rigours, or singularities; which makes no noise, and courts no observation. It is so with delicacy. *That* is *always* the most exquisite, which is least *ostentatious*.

An *unstudied* openness and simplicity of manners are the strongest symptoms of a guiltless heart, and a virtuous intention. Those young people are, generally the most amiable, that are most undisguised. Having nothing to *conceal*, they have studied no *art*. They may, *sometimes*, give way to little fallies, which the *rigid* would condemn; but they are fallies of good *humour*, and generosity forgives them.

Another instance, in which this Lady offended me, and yet from an *over* desire of pleasing, was by assuming a mistaken dignity. In fact, true dignity, in any person, consists in the *virtues*; humility, condescension, candour; and is only supported by *great* qualities, or by a train of amiable actions. But in a *woman's* manner, if she considered only what is *graceful*, there should always be more of the lovely, than the great; of the engaging, than the magnificent or sublime. Her *authority* should be lost in *sweetness*; the dazzling, in the mild.

Women were not formed to *awe* us by their majesty, but to *sooth* us by their graces. We may be struck with

a Cleopatra, but we *love* an Antiope. A Catharine may *astonish* us, but we are *charmed* with a —C—e.

LETTER XVI.

THE tour of affectation is unbounded. I have just returned from a circle of ladies, who have been entertaining me with a very long harangue, on (what they choose to call,) *fine feelings*. This is quite a fashionable subject. The truth is, sensibility is considered, as a matter of refinement, and a proof of being raised above the vulgar ; and many young people, I do believe, would be more hurt by any reflection on their sensibility, than if you suspected their piety and virtue.

This *rage* for the compliment of fine feelings seems to have originated in the writings of Sterne. His very eccentric talents were always contriving some fictitious tale of woe, and bidding the tear to drop ; the general circulation of his works, and the novels which have, since, sprung up in the *hot-bed* of France, and of our own *imagination*s, have led young people to fancy every grace and almost every virtue, comprised under this specious and comprehensive name.

Nothing certainly can be more nauseous and disgusting, than an *affect*ed sensibility, as nothing is more charming, than the pure and genuine. But, with all this *noise* about it, I am far from knowing whether there is much of the real in the world. They, who would be thought to have it in perfection, are only in possession of the *artificial*. For is it sensibility to prefer the turbid pleasures of *midnight* to opening buds and blossoms ; to the lessons, which the Creator gives in every vegetable and every insect ; to undisturbed contemplation ; to the raptures of devotion, or all the

fair and enchanting landscapes of creation ; to the sentiment, the taste and knowledge, that are displayed in the works of the most learned and ingenious men, or the entertainment and delight and profit, we might receive from the volume of revelation ? Is it sensibility to form a sacred connection with one person, and encourage a criminal attachment to another ? Is it sensibility to leave the charms, the cries, the wants and tender pleadings of an infant offspring, for the vain and perishable splendour of a ball, a birth-night or a levee ?

Every *thinking* person must be disgusted with *such* a kind of sensibility. Rigid criticism would call it by a very harsh name, and society has reason to reprobate its tendency. Yet Sterne's sensibility led to many of these evils ; and who knows not, that a thousand ladies, who *vaunt fine* feelings, are dupes to this ridiculous illusion ?

True feeling is of a very different complexion. Like genius, it must come from *heaven* ; indeed it is a part of genius ; and, like that, is very rare. It depends, considerably on temperament and organization ; is much heightened by particular advantages of education, society, friends, reading, observation and reflection ; and will generally be quickest in the most elevated minds. But, even when it is most genuine and poignant, it will never be a guide, safely to be trusted, till it is governed by reason, checked by discretion, and moulded by that religion, which requires us to devote every *instinct* we have, to the glory of God, and to the happiness of all our fellow-creatures, and of ourselves.

Thus *consecrated*, it is a source of the purest and the richest blessings. It is the parent of an earnest devotion to him, who gave it, and of a thousand blessings to mankind. It *appropriates* all the sorrows of its brethren ; it feels in every woe, " rejoices with them, that do rejoice, and weeps with them that weep ;" and doubly alive to all the exercises, of piety, in blossoms,

in flowers, in minerals, in vegetables, in stars, in planets, in the azure vault of heaven, in thunders, in storms, in earthquakes, in volcanoes, in the revolutions of empire, and destruction of cities, feels most exquisitely, adores and loves and venerates the wisdom, the power, the goodness and wonders of an all-present, and all-disposing God.

It is with this, as with every other grace and virtue. There is a false and a true. The false is loud and noisy, much addicted to *egotism*, and obtrudes itself on public observation in order to gratify its own conceit and vanity; the other, modest, timid, retired *shrinks* into itself; feels, but says nothing of its feelings; suffers, but conceals its sufferings; rejoices, but does not vaunt its joy, and is too *delicate* in its nature, and too much *interested* to solicit pity, or to court approbation. The one is an humble fire work, which cracks and sparkles; the other is that lightning, which, in an *instant*, electrifies and shocks; this is the offspring of heaven; that, the artificial creature of the world.

I will conclude this letter with a contrast taken from life. Flavia lies in bed till noon; as soon as she rises, she opens a novel, or a play book; weeps profusely at *imaginary* distress, sips strong tea, till she is almost in hysterics; concludes, that sensibility is all her own, and is perpetually complaining how her feelings are shocked with such a room, or such a prospect, the coarseness of *this* character, and of *that* conversation, and how the sight of a poor beggar gives her the *vapours*.

Emily never says a word about her feelings, rises with the dawn, endeavours to fortify her body with air and exercise, and her mind with devotion; is oftener seen with her *bible*, than any other book; seems pleased with every person and every object about her, and puts on a cheerful smile, when her bosom is *really* throbbing with pain, for the distresses of her fellow-creatures.

I was lately in her company, when a case of very singular distress happened to be related, of a lady reduced, from the height of affluence, to a poverty, which she attempted to conceal. She uttered not a syllable, but, in a little while, quitted the room, and returned, after a considerable interval, with eyes, that she had vainly bidden not to betray her emotions. The next circumstance I heard, was, that she had sent a £50 bank note without any signature, to the relief of the fair sufferer. The secret was discovered, contrary to the strictest injunctions, by the *imprudence* of the bearer. She has, since, adopted one of the daughters to be educated for her own.

Tell me now, my Lucy, which of these is the true and the *productive* sensibility.

LETTER XVII.

I WILL give you candidly, at your request, my opinion of some celebrated writers. If you differ from me on reading them, it may produce a collision of sentiments, which will be favourable to our mutual improvement. At any rate, it will serve to exercise your own judgment and discrimination.

Voltaire is a graceful, but a *superficial* writer. He had more taste than genius, and more liveliness than authenticity. Volatile in his researches, impatient of investigation and hasty in his decisions, you can scarcely rely on the truth or authority of any facts, he relates.

If I must recommend *any* of his works, it should be his *Henriade*. But I do not wish you to cultivate any close acquaintance with so erroneous, and seductive an author.

Rousseau is very fanciful, but very engaging. His whims are all the ebullitions of genius; and, as such,

they please. Nothing was ever so strangely romantic, as his Emilius, or system of Education ; a mere, *paper* edifice of children, which the first and gentlest touch of experience totally destroys. You may read it to be amused, not to be instructed.

Why, you will naturally ask, were these distinguished men enemies to revelation ? The truth is, genius disdains to move in shackles, or to tread *beaten* paths. Originality is its constant aim. It must candidly, be owned, that revelation has some doctrines, *superior* to our reason. Otherwise, we should have no exercise for our faith ; and our organs of perception would be too subtle and too refined for a mortal state. And these very enlightened men choose not to stop at *mysteries*, but, in the pride of understanding, arrogantly disbelieve what they cannot *comprehend*.

Happy the humble christian, who submits and adores ! who considers reason but as an *imperfect* guide, and patiently waits the moment, when the splendours of full discovery shall shine around him !

LETTER XVIII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

AFTER all the noise, that has been made about him, what has this great Lord Chesterfield written ? What *new* ideas has he communicated to the world ?

He has given us a few sketches of heathen mythology, of the Grecian, Roman and English, histories, written in a pleasing style ; and he has inculcated upon youth, that excellent maxim, of not losing a single moment from improvement. A man of very *moderate* talents might have done likewise. He had doubtless,

some claim to taste ; but very little strength or originality of genius appears through his writings, but he was a *nobleman*, who had been conspicuous for his station, and his coronet had reflected a lustre on his page.

What real critic must not smile at his decision, when he boldly pronounces the *Henriade* of Voltaire, superior to the *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, and to *Paradise Lost* ? Perhaps, this poem may be free from some, little *spots* of the others ; but then it is not a sun, whose fire consumes every slighter blemish, and leaves the reader wrapped in a profound enthusiasm and amazement.

If it surpasses them in a cold correctness, has it their sublimity, their energy and fire ? If it has not their excrescences, has it their impassioned beauties ? Compared with the *Iliad*, or with the work of Milton, it is a neat spruce fir, placed near a spreading and majestic oak. It is a gentle rivulet by the side of a foaming torrent, or a magnificent ocean. It is a pretty artificial fire-work, playing in the neighbourhood of a tremendous *Ætna*.

But Voltaire was a *congenial* writer, and a congenial soul. In praising his *superficial* talents, Chesterfield did an honour to his own.

If this writer had not been a peer, who would have read his letters with so much avidity ? All he has produced, would, immediately have perished with the other *frothy* bubbles of the day. His eternal repetition of “graces, graces,” makes one absolutely sick ; and the regimen he prescribes for the attainment of them, creates him an enemy, in every friend of religion and of virtue.

Society should *burn* his books. All the women in the world, should form an *unanimous* confederacy against him. He has done every thing in his power to render them detestable ; *they* should do every thing in *theirs*, to make the infamy of his character, immortal.

Read him, to despise his opinions and maxims. Read him that you may *rescue* the honours of your sex,

and give the lie, in your own example, to every *libel* he has uttered, and every scandal he has endeavoured to propagate through the world.

LETTER XIX.

GIBBON is splendid, elaborate, elegant. To me, however, he is not, always, *perspicuous*. I am *sometimes*, obliged to pause to discover his meaning. This arises from his having studied an uniform, condensed harmony of period, or attempting to graft the peculiarities of *Tacitus*, on the English idiom. He is, however, on the whole, a captivating writer; and I would not forbid you the pleasure of perusing his interesting work. You may admire his language, without imbibing his infidelity. It is, indeed, so artfully concealed under beds of roses, that, if you had not heard so much about it, you would not easily have discovered the venom of his pen.

What could induce this splendid historian so insidiously to attempt the undermining of christianity, which is the greatest balm and sweetner of life? What are his rounded periods, if they have a tendency to rob the world of its sublimest prospects, and of all its supporting hopes? What will the fame of *talents* avail him, if he has done his utmost to circulate infidelity, as widely as his writings, and strew his paths, in every place, through which he has passed, with heaps of the murdered.

It is amazing that authors do not, more frequently, look forward to the moment, when to have made a noise in the world, by *singular* opinions, will convey no joy or comfort to the heart; and when the only consolation must be, that they have laboured to promote the glory of God, and the benefit of man.

I would not, for the richest mitre in the kingdom, be a Gibbon, in my latest moments. In health and prosperity, we may be dazzled with tinsel. But when we come to die, every thing will vanish, but piety and truth.

Immoral writers may do the greatest mischief to society, of any other characters whatever. They may corrupt and taint the morals of the most distant posterity. In this sense, they may, for a long time, *continue* to be sinning, when their bodies are entombed. Their sentiments may convey a deadly poison, to operate on many generations yet unborn. And what reparation or atonement can they make for unhinged principle, for violated integrity, and undermined hope. The Romish Church has a very striking doctrine, that such people continue in purgatory, the longest of all others.

I bless God, that I never wrote a line, however feeble, but with a good intention. And may this pen drop from my hands, before it ever leads me to finish a period, that shall give me one uncomfortable thought, or one feeling of remorse, in my expiring moments.

LETTER XX.

MY DEAR LUCY,

THOUGH, from principle, a declaimer against novels, yet of *one* writer, who goes under this name, I profess myself a passionate admirer. I mean Richardson. His works, indeed, are not to be examined by the strict laws of a fastidious criticism. They have many *luxuriancies*, and too much *prolixity*. The language is natural and easy, but it is not *condensed* into the elegant conciseness and *energy* of the ancients. Richardson was a stranger to the inimitable models of

Greece and Rome. He was not a *classic* ; but he possessed a most extensive knowledge of human life and manners ; his judgment was strong and penetrating ; his taste, accurate ; his sensibility, exquisite ; his imagination, wonderful ; and his heart impassioned. Master of the human character, he knew all its *meandrings*. Master of the human soul, he penetrated into all its foldings and recesses.

With the same breath, and in the same moment, he melts, he transports, he elevates, he dignifies, he convinces, and instructs. Pathos is all his own. “ He opens the hardest rocks by the mere force of his narrative, and the waters flow.”

Richardson was, indeed, a writer of no trifling magnitude. He was a genius of no ordinary kind. Degrade this *ethereal* spirit, as you will, it will mount up to its kindred skies. Call him a *novelist*, his merit rises above names and forms. *These* cannot debase his talents. Handle this substance, as roughly as you please, it returns, with an elastic vigour, to its usual shape, and defies opposition.

But the excellency of his *intention* is above all praise. The interests of virtue and religion were near his heart ; and he chose the epistolary plan merely to engage the attention of his readers, and that imagination might lend its liveliest charms to *animate* his precepts.

What a pattern of all virtues and graces is his Grandison ! What a lovely and finished girl, is his Harriet Byron ! What an unruffled piety ! What a melting affection ! What filial duty to her aged grandmother ? What a kind sympathy with all her friends ! What sensibility, yet what prudence ! What tenderness, yet what discretion appear in her character ! How nicely is her seriousness mixed with vivacity, her fine sense with modesty, and her frankness, with decorum ! How

fondly does she love, yet how delicately does she manage and regulate the flame !

When she pined, in secret, with an unconquerable attachment, what cheerfulness to all her friends burst through the heavy gloom, that lowered on her mind ! What fear of giving any pain to others, though comfortless herself ! What veneration did she express for the unhappy Clementina ! What a generous concern for the innocent, girlish emotions of Emily ! What an unaffected friendship for the lively Lady G —, and when she was really addressed by her Grandison, with what an open frankness, yet what a guarded delicacy and involuntary confusion, did she tell him that he had the full possession of her soul !

How venerable and engaging has this writer made the character of a clergyman, in the case of Dr. Bartlett ! How judiciously has he mixed the pastor, with the friend, and combined the most rigid principles, with the softest and most attractive graces. What innocence, integrity, and what prudence and caution about interfering in *family* concerns, has he given, in another work, to Dr. Lewen ! What an *independent* spirit, likewise ; what a learning to the side of the unfortunate Clarissa, in opposition to all the greatest of her friends ; what a glowing, universal benevolence ; what a serene, and undissembled piety ! And how strikingly has he contrasted *both* with the cunning hypocrisy and pedantic affectation of another person, who, likewise, wore, without really *deserving*, so sacred a garb !

In opposition to modern customs, which under a *false* idea of greatness, would trample on sacred ceremonies, and bring the holy ordinances of religion, to their own *fire-sides*, in a manner, which divests them of all solemnity and decorum, what an invincible attachment does his Grandison display to all the *decencies* and duties of the church ! What a reluctance does he express against having his marriage *desecrated* by a

private celebration ; and how does he oblige his timid and his blushing Harriet to vow at the *altar*, in the presence of God, and in the face of day, her obedience and her affection ! In fact these outward *decencies* are the very fences of piety. Break them down, and the sacred enclosure will soon become “ common “ and unclean.”

If, in short, I wished a girl to be every thing, that was *great*, I would have her continually study his *Clarissa*. If I was ambitious to make her every thing, that was *lovely*, she should spend *her days and nights*, in contemplating his *Byron*.

I must, however, confess a strong preference for the work of Sir Charles Grandison. The reading of *Clarissa* leaves, upon the mind, too melancholy impressions. Her distresses are too deep and too *unvaried* for sensibility to bear. She was every thing, that was virtuous, and we look up with admiration. She was every thing, that was miserable, and we look *down* with despair. We are tempted to fancy, that “ there “ is no reward for the righteous, nor any God that “ judgeth the earth.”

There is a certain point, *beyond* which our passions will not bear to be racked. Beyond it even sympathy, the loveliest of them all, turns into the wildness of despair. Virtue may have its sorrows and its trials ; but they should not be *perpetual*. Hope would cease to bloom, and the year become intolerable, if it was wholly composed of a dull and dreary winter, without a spring. If Providence did not, generally, interfere in favour of its saints, religion, I should suspect, would soon lose one of its strongest encouragements, and most sovereign supports.

Miss Byron is always lovely, and always enchanting. Her virtues are more within the reach of mortality. Her afflictions are less poignant ; and when her long attachment is crowned with success, every

good mind feels a pleasure, too big for expression. We are happy for Clarissa, only when she is *dead*. We are very agreeably interested for Miss Byron, through every period of her life, and *Lady Grandison* charms us into congratulating triumph.

LETTER XXI.

YOU say very truly, that the pictures of Richardson are drawn above life; that Sir Charles Grandison never existed, except in idea, nor so accomplished a woman, as Harriet Byron.

All this is granted. Mortality does not admit of perfection. Light and shade go together. Foibles and perfections are an *inseparable* mixture. The rich soil, which produces great talents, by the same prolific energy, nurses the rankest weeds.

But what is all this against his writings? Why people, you say, are deterred from attempting to imitate so exalted a pattern. But that would be a mark of an ignoble soul, and of a lukewarmness in the cause of religion and virtue. If we despair of attaining to all their *perfections*, is it nothing to *approximate*, as nearly as we can? Is it not a noble and a glorious emulation, at least, to exert our *utmost* strength, when we are running the race of immortality?

The founder of our holy religion is much more highly raised above our imitation, and yet do not the scriptures press us to make the necessary attempt? Who ever thought, this pattern blameable, because so *exalted*? Or whoever dreamed of remitting his endeavours, because he could not reach the *sublimity* of its virtues?

The one, you will say, was real; the other is fictitious; this is human; that was divine.

True ; but are we not to copy this divinity, in our degree ? And who can blame fancy for presenting us with a *perfect* mirror of goodness ? If imagination can be used to an important purpose, this, I think, is the plan ; if it can be *sanctified* to aid the interests of piety, this appears the mode of sanctification. It is only to be blamed, and it then becomes, in all these books, a most dangerous and unholy principle, when it exhibits scenes and images to inflame those passions, which should always be, religiously, suppressed.

Nor do I blush, on the whole, cautious as I should be, to have borne this humble testimony to the merit of the author of Sir Charles Grandison, to have offered my unavailing incense, at his shrine. If I durst *preach* in some such manner, I could make more converts. The pulpit will never have its full influence and effect, till *argument* is mixed with strong appeals to the *heart* ; and till, whilst the judgment is convinced, the imagination is permitted by lively, descriptive and energetic sallies, to captivate the soul.

LETTER XXII.

MY DEAR LUCY,

I REJOICE to find you disgusted with Tristram Shandy. I never thought these writings fit for a lady.

Let me candidly ask our modern fair ones ? Could they bear to hear such *conversations*, without blushing, or expressing their contempt ? And should not then the eye be as chaste, as the ear ? The first, indeed, can be gratified in private. But can that delicacy be every exquisite, which can regale, when alone, on sen-

timents and descriptions, from which, in *public*, it affects to turn away with indignation and abhorrence?

I have always, in private lamented, that Sterne was a clergyman. He might be a lively, humorous companion, but he had too much *levity* for this profession. It is true, he had talents, but what is *ungoverned* genius, but a violent flame, which burns, instead of warming, and dazzles, where it should enlighten and direct?

This writer has done inexpressible mischief. He has opened wide the flood-gates of indecency, and an overwhelming torrent has poured on the land. He has conveyed *indelicate* ideas into the minds of young people, under the specious vehicle of sentiment, and he has dignified *eventual* criminality with the false, insidious title of *involuntary* attachment. The corrupted and unblushing fair has glorified in her shame. She has appealed for her justification, from the *grossness* of passion, to secret and *irresistible* feelings of the heart.

It is a just compliment to the present age, that the best writers preserve more decorum. An *indelicate* allusion would, now, be esteemed an unpardonable offence against the public taste. Even the *stage* is considerably reformed. It was far otherwise in (what was called) our *Augustan* age. Almost every author of *that* period (Addison excepted,) breathes something of indelicacy. In many passages, Swift is intolerable; Pope indecent; and even Bolingbroke, with all his claims to birth, as well as eloquence, is not without some *gross* ideas, and some vulgar expressions.

But the great corrupter of them all was Swift. The *reservoir* of filthiness; all the separate streams might claim him for their parent source. I have already given my sentiments of this author. It is not necessary to swell the invective, or add any thing to the charges, adduced against him. His abilities I never suspected; but I always called in question his temper and his heart.

Panegyrist, however, have enumerated his many virtues. To Ireland, they say, he was a skilful patriot ; to the church, a defender, and to the poor a friend.

For the honour of human nature, I will not endeavour to put a negative on these virtues. Let them all be taken into the *general* account. The balance will not still be heavy in his favour.

LETTER XXIII.

WHATEVER devotional writers increase your piety, by all means use them. I *did* not mention in my catalogue, *Mrs. Rowe's Devout Exercises of the Heart*, with which you are so much pleased, because to me they appeared, *overstrained*, and rather rhapsodies of a fervid imagination, than the dictates of a cool and a dispassionate judgment. But if they really warm and edify, *that* is the great and ultimate end of all religious writings ; and no one can pretend, in this respect, to prescribe to the conscience or the feelings of others.

From my observations, however, upon life and manners, that piety has always appeared the most *durable*, which is most founded on reason and conviction ; and, though I abhor the cold rock of scepticism, yet there is, likewise, some danger, that a well disposed woman, whose sensibility is, as yet stronger than her judgment, may founder on the opposite quicksands of enthusiasm, or of superstition.

Still I would rather see a small mixture of *credulity*, than *unbelief* ; but there is an happy medium betwixt the extremes ; and it is very observable, that those people, who, in some peculiar period of their lives, or under some *distressing* circumstances, have seemed to soar upon the wings of pious zeal, into the highest re-

gions, have, afterwards, sunk below the common level, into a strange degree of carelessness and inattention.

There are moments in the moral life, when fancy plucks the reins out of the hands of reason; and though she drives at intervals with a furious rapidity, yet nature soon becomes exhausted with the violence, and cannot mount some intervening hills without stopping for refreshment. Sometimes she has been known to sit down in a listless languor, and wholly to abandon the journey in despair.

We are not, in this state, formed for *extremes*. Any of the passions, too *violently* exercised, would wear out an imperfect frame. True piety is not the blazing *meteor* of an hour, fiery in its aspect, and engaging the astonishment of a gazing multitude, but that softer and settled light of the firmament, "which shineth more
" and more, unto the perfect day."

LETTER XXIV.

I AM sorry to say, that you display a *false* taste in admiring Kilkhampton Abbey. I am now speaking of its merits, merely as a *composition*. It is not executed with the skill of a master. The same uniform turn of period and of sentiment, and the same labored *pomp* of words, is visible through all the different inscriptions. Surely the epitaphs on so many characters, all written as might be supposed, by *different* hands, should be various and multiform.

I never thought epitaph an easy species of writing. It requires such a nice discrimination of character, such a force of pathos, and so concise an elegance, as fall not to the lot of one man, in a thousand. Many have attempted this style of composition; but, in my opinion, few have succeeded.

I do, indeed, most cordially detest this *anonymous* abuse. It is contrary to all my ideas of civilization, politeness, fortitude, and even common generosity, and militates against every thing, that should constitute the real character of a gentleman, or a christian.

No man lives, without *foibles* or *particularities* ; and, if instead of making allowance for those of others, in order to receive an indulgence for our own, we ungenerously expose them to ridicule or contempt, the consequence, in society, must be a general coldness, disgust, rancour, hostility, and *unceasing* persecution.

No person can be so circumspect, particularly, in a public character, as to avoid creating, though without intending it, a number of little piques and enemies against himself ; sometimes even by an inflexible discharge of *necessary* duties ; and if his character must be taken from the colourings of those, whom he has thus innocently, perhaps *laudably*, offended, all his virtues will be thrown into the back ground, and his foibles aggravated with the utmost virulence of malice and resentment. Prejudice *against*, may render the most amiable person *ridiculous*, by concealing the *great*, and bringing forward the little ; and prejudice *for*, may give some sort of merit to the most despicable and abandoned. Such a liberty of the press is downright *licentiousness* ; and every friend to order and virtue, if he will consult his own feelings, will not hesitate to pronounce, that, of all *sacred* things, character is *most* so.

If a person, however great, had used me *ungenerously*, I would certainly expose him to public censure, and drag him before the formidable tribunal of my country. I would appeal from the oppression of any *individual*, to the *general* equity and candour of mankind. *This*, I should conceive, not merely an act of justice to *myself*, but likewise to the world. It is a *common* interest, that *tyrants*, however high in rank, or in self-estimation, should meet with their deserved infamy and contempt.—

Such a display of *true* spirit wonderfully stops the progress of despotism, and teaches insolence the hard lesson of moderation. But, then, it should be done in the most open manner. I would candidly subscribe my name to the charges, I adduced; and, whilst I shewed the world that I feared not the person of man, I would convince mine adversary, that I was far above the mean-ness of taking an *unmanly* or ungenerous revenge.

This honest courage was possessed, in an eminent degree, by the late Dr. Johnson. Nothing has pleased me more in the history of his life, than his truly magnanimous conduct to the late earl of Chesterfield. When he undertook to compose his *elaborate* dictionary, he solicited the favour of inscribing it to his Lordship, who was then if I mistake not Secretary of State. Flattered with *appearing* the patron of literature, Chesterfield accepted the honour of the dedication, and an *honour* it would have been to any nobleman in the world.—In the progress of this long and tedious work, he received no very solid marks of encouragement from his patron, and suspected on the whole, that the courtly peer meant only to *amuse* him.

Johnson had too much spirit either to brook the idea of neglect, the chicanery of a minister, the violation of a promise, or the servility of an abject dependence. He was not likely to be dazzled with the glitter of a coronet, or intimidated with the ceremonious pageantry of office. He, therefore, wrote a formal letter to the nobleman, upbraiding him with insincerity, disclaiming his protection, and assuring him, that he did not want, and never would receive, any of his favours.—The consequence of this *fracas* was, that he afterwards stung Chesterfield with such bitter invectives, and so many pointed strokes of raillery and satire, as made him heartily repent of having roused his resentment, and desirous, at any rate, of a reconciliation. Johnson,

however, persisted in his antipathy, and never afterwards, I believe wrote a dedication.

If Chesterfield intended only to dally with the author of this dictionary, he should certainly have considered, that men of great abilities have too much penetration not to see through any flimsy disguises of a minister ; too much irritability not to be exasperated with hypocrisy or artifice, and too *lofty* a reliance on their own *native* powers to be afraid of any peer or monarch in the world.

Johnson, it is true, had not then attained all his eminence and distinction. He was comparatively, but *rising* into notice. The day that should announce him the hero of literature, was only in its dawn. But contrasted with his *solid* merit, what is the paltry tinsel of station, from which some people immediately become so supercilious and forbidding ?

If Chesterfield did not think the author of the *Rambler*, greater than himself ; if from the foot alone, he could not prognosticate the future strength and immense proportions of this literary *Hercules*, he had not a single grain of that shrewdness or discernment, for which he has been so much complimented by the world.

Such is *my* idea of the true and genuine spirit, which should characterize a scholar and a gentleman. It is not a stiletto, stabbing in the dark, but a challenge to a fair and generous onset, in which your antagonist has the opportunity of self-defence, and of managing all his weapons to advantage.

LETTER XXV.

THE beauty of the lady you allude to, was her misfortune. It inspired her with an immoderate

vanity, and that vanity paved the way to her ruin. It dug the grave, in which her peace and character are now intombed.

And after all, my dear girl, what *is* this beauty? It is a little clay, cast in an elegant mould, and by the hand of an exquisite artist, fashioned into something of symmetry and order. It is a small mixture, in the cheek of roses and carnations.

But who needs to be informed that clay is very perishable, that roses and carnations are but for *summer moments*, and that afterwards there comes a long autumn of sickness or a still more dreary winter of infirmity and old age.

How transient are the power and duration of beauty! How very slight an accident or disease blasts it for ever! How fatal is a fever, the small pox, or a little corroding grief to all its allurements! and if they do not perish sooner, how dreadfully are they ravaged by the hand of time!

Whilst summer lasts, a few, fluttering insects light upon its lips to sip the sweets. Some straggling birds of passage chirp upon the neighbouring spray, delighted with a view of the amiable object. The notice is enchanting, and imagination promises that it shall be *eternal*. But the first storm, that comes, alas! these feathered songsters migrate to warmer climates, and a serener sky, leaving all its withered charms to perish in neglect!

How ridiculous is the girl, who wilfully swallows the poison of flattery for any personal charms, and, in the height of her intoxication, can be insolent or conceited! What woman of spirit should not aspire to qualities, that are less *accidental* and less subject to change! What woman of reflexion should not resolve to adorn and cultivate a mind, whose treasures may be inexhaustable, and whose attractions never die?

I pity every girl, whom nature has gifted with a very pretty face. She seems, by the very act, to have marked her out for trials and temptations, and our strength is not always in proportion to our conflicts.

Most of the unfortunate ladies I have known, have been celebrated for their beauty. This has gathered all the worthless of our sex about them ; and called them into battle, where, if they have not fallen, they have *generally* received considerable scars.

Beautiful women, flushed with conquest, often neglect the *necessary* cultivation of their heart and understanding ; and, if every man would examine himself seriously, and was required to give in a list of the females he *most* respects, the prettiest, I believe, would not *generally*, be in the number.

LETTER XXVI.

DO you ask for *patterns* of conduct after what I have said of Louisa ? I do not think you want any ; but I will mention a few, which just occur, and endeavour to appreciate their merits or defects.

Addison has several in his spectators, which are wrought up with inimitable beauty.

The *Antiope* of Cambray, is a charming picture, but it betrays the touches of a popish ecclesiastic.

Laro's Miranda is an heroine of virtue ; but she breathes too much the austerity and the abstraction of that very animated, but peculiar, writer. Her piety is too monastic. It wants grace, cheerfulness and ease.

Richardson's Clarissa has qualities *above* woman, and her sorrows plunge the reader into despair.

Miss Byron is every thing, that is finished in a female. We admire her greatly, but we love her more.

The *sweetness* of the character swallows up its dignity ; in the amiable, we forget the great. She is precisely what every man of principle and taste would have a woman *to be*, when he wishes to be married, and wishes to be happy.

With *some* persons, his *Clementina* may have her superior excellencies. A passion, all sentiment, and all directed to the *mind*, and a superstitious religion, in a particular country, wholly vanquishing that passion, may be a fine-spun, amusing speculation. But to me it appears visionary and *romantic* ; and the admirers of this story will generally, I conceive, be found amongst those ladies who would gladly persuade us, that by a *rant* of goodness, they can rise above the innocent passions of mortality, and all the *natural* weaknesses of their sex.

When I wish to be delighted and charmed with woman, I would always place before me the full-length piece of *Harriet Byron*. She has sentiment, but she has frailty ; she has *spirit*, but she confesses herself to have, likewise, *matter* in her composition.

LETTER XXVII.

POOOR Louisa, notwithstanding all her goodness, is, at present, in the greatest affliction, and for a reason, which reflects no little honor on her sensibility and virtue.

I have just received a letter from her father, informing me, that Dr. —, Rector of B—, and the confidential friend and intimate of their family, is very probable on his death bed. He was lately called upon, it seems, to visit one of his hearers, who was sick with a putrid, sore throat, and fever, and has taken the infection. The physicians entertain but slender

hopes of his recovery, and Philander* has been administering to him that holy sacrament, which with prayers and blessings, he has himself so often, administered to others. The whole village is in mourning. All the the peasants, I am told, appear as sheep without a shepherd.

This good man was well acquainted with every person in his parish. He thought it his duty, to visit all his hearers, to investigate their *spiritual*, as well as temporal wants, and to remove the former whilst he extended a liberal supply to the latter.

The death of such a person is more than the loss of the nearest relatives. A *good* clergyman, in the *country*, unites, in his own person, all the tender connections. He is father, brother, guardian, all in one. Dr. — was not only revered as a minister, but in every family welcomed as a bosom friend.

A religious pastor, indeed, never fully knows the comforts of his office, till he is thus united to his people, “till he knows his sheep and they follow “him.” In such an intimacy, hearts expand; many excellent and seasonable advices may be given which the solemnity of the pulpit would not admit; little griefs are unbosomed; little perplexities are removed, and affection springs up by the side of duty.

I am going to make a visit to this worthy clergyman, and will give you the earliest intelligence of the state in which I find him.

LETTER XXVIII.

THE apprehensions concerning Dr. — were but too well founded. He is, I do believe, in

* The Father of Louisa.

the last stages of his life. Death is on the point of closing his eyes, and opening for him the just reward of all his labours and his zeal.

I have been with him almost night and day, ever since I had the pleasure of writing to you, and have received a stronger lesson, than ever, of the vanity of all earthly things, and the supreme dignity of virtue.

These solemn scenes wonderfully improve the heart. They strip ambition of its plumage. The world appears a phantom ! honours and promotions all a dream !

Though I have been much affected, yet I have been comforted in an equal degree, by his cheerful piety, and edifying conversation. His faith and resignation rise superior to his pains. They are literally big with immortality ; and he longs to be dissolved and to be with Christ.

Unwearied and exemplary as he has *always* been in the discharge of his pastoral duties he is continually lamenting his want of zeal, vigilance and exertion. The duties of the ministry are, I do believe, beyond human ability : “ who, said St. Paul, is sufficient for “ these things ? ” But when I hear the declarations of this excellent man, and compare, as it is natural, his example with my own, I cannot but be seriously alarmed, and sketch out nothing for *my own* last moments, but remorse and fears.

My good friend and his lady have taken their last leave. It would have touched *any* heart to have seen this interview. I cannot do it justice by *words*. The pencil of a Raphael could not fully represent it. It was all *heart* and soul. Silent looks and *manner* were the principal language, and they spoke indeed ! Such a woman’s breast panting with grief, upon such an occasion, rises above the powers of description.

“ O ” (says the expiring christian, raising his languid eyes and endeavouring to use a tongue, which death had almost pallied,) “ be as you *have* been, the

“ comforters of my people (for they alas ! will feel
“ a *transient* void,) and our friendship, I doubt not, will
“ shortly be renewed in another life. Death can on-
“ ly, for a little time, separate these *bodies* : our real
“ *interests*, our *souls* and happiness must ever be uni-
“ ted.”

Louisa is inconsolable. “ Tears have been her
“ meat day and night ;” and her grief is the heavier,
as she is not permitted, from motives of *prudence*, to
see the last struggles of this excellent man, or receive
his blessing.

“ Providence, (says the accomplished girl,) has
“ now, but, *one* heavier stroke to inflict, and that is
“ the death of my father, or my mother. Indeed a
“ *second* father he has always been to me, in the ful-
“ lest sense of the word. What has not this good
“ man done, what has he not ever said to train my
“ youthful sentiments to virtue, and direct my steps
“ into the way of peace ! To *him* I could disclose
“ every rising fear. To him I could unbosom the
“ anxious sorrow, that would have lurked at my heart.
“ But why should I complain ? Have I not still a
“ *thousand* comforts, spread round my retirement ?
“ Have I not *yet* two parents left, accomplished, as
“ they are tender, and watchful, as they are good ?
“ It is improper to grieve. I will dry these tears.
“ It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.
“ The good Abraham was required to sacrifice on
“ the altar, with his *own* hands, an only son. And
“ I should surely learn to resign without murmuring,
“ whenever it shall seem meet to his wisdom and good-
“ ness, the nearest friend.”

LETTER XXIX.

THE conflict is finished. The pangs are over. Dr. — is no more. He is now, I trust, a blessed spirit, and knows no longer pain, or sorrow, or apprehension.

From the natural tenderness and sensibility of his temper you may wonder that he lived and died unmarried. But it is a secret known only to his intimate friends that he had formed an attachment, in his early years, which being disappointed by the death of the lady, the delicacy of his mind never *afterwards* admitted of another. His partiality was not of the common fugitive kind. It was a deep and *permanent* impression. Having once fondly loved, he attempted to love no more.

As his private fortune was comfortable, and his preferment, good, you will conclude, perhaps, that he died very rich. But this is not the case. The poor were constantly fed from his table, as well as edified by his counsels. He was a living example of the charity he recommended, and a witness of the truth, “that it is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Though remarkable for his prudence, as well as pastoral zeal, yet having but a few, distant relatives, who were all in very easy circumstances, he has only left to each, an equal legacy of £100 and the remainder of the £5000, he possessed, is entirely devoted to charitable uses.

To each of his three servants, he has bequeathed an annual stipend of £20, on this easy condition, however that they be never absent, when in *health*, from the church or sacrament; that they always appear neat and decent, and that they lay up, from their pittance, one single six pence on the first day of every week, to be, expended in *charity*. The residue of his fortune is to

be employed, partly in establishing a fund for the distribution of religious books and tracts, amongst the poor and ignorant of his parish, at the discretion of the minister ; and, partly, for the clothing and educating a specific number of boys and girls in a school, which he had founded, and very principally supported in his life-time.

My friend and I are joint executors. To him he has demised a considerable part of his excellent library ; to me a number of books, which are at once a monument of his taste and friendship ; to Mrs. —, all the elegant furniture of his drawing room, and to his sweet, and, as he styles her, ever dear Louisa, his pictures, statues, busts and petrefactions, beside a number of *devotional* authors, gilt and finished with an elegance and beauty, which express the opinion he had justly conceived of her cultivated mind.

When the poor girl was informed of this legacy, she burst into a flood of tears, nor could all the tender offices of her friends console her. “ How insupportable
“ (said she,) is this man’s generosity ! with what
“ a cruel kindness does he haunt me after death ! Had
“ it not been for this perhaps, I should more easily
“ have learned the *hard* lesson of resignation. But
“ this tenderness renews my grief, and tears open
“ afresh the wounds, which I have been summoning
“ all my fortitude to close. But why must I not see
“ this good man on his death-bed, to testify, for the
“ last time, the warmth of my gratitude, and the sincerity of my esteem ?

“ But tell me, ye, who were admitted to his presence, what said he of me, in his latest moments ?
“ Did he, then, at all recollect his Louisa ? Did he
“ even glance at so humble a name ? Did he send me
“ one precious word of advice ? Did he conjure me
“ never to forget his directions ? Did he bid me to
“ be virtuous, did he bid me to be happy ? Yes, bles-

“ fed spirit, I will remember thy example : I
 “ will treasure up thy counfels. Thy instructions
 “ fhall never fade. Thy memory fhall be immortal.”

And, now, what is your opinion of Louifa ? What think you of *ſuch* a clergyman ? What are dignities, compared with ſuch virtues ? What are kingdoms, contraſted with ſuch joys ? Should not hiſtory embalm his relics, and ſhould not gratitude pour over his undying memory, an undying perfume ?

LETTER XXX.

I REJOICE to hear that you have ſo great a taſte for paintings. You will find it an inexhauſtible ſource of pleaſure and improvement. For,

“ Each pleaſing art lends ſoftneſs to our minds,
 “ And with our ſtudies, are our lives refin’d.”

I will give you a very handſome eulogy on this art, in the words of a great writer, Quintilian. “ Picture
 “ (ſays he,) a ſilent and uniform addreſs, yet penetrates ſo deeply into our inmoſt affections, that it
 “ ſeems often to exceed even the powers of eloquence.
 “ Its effects, indeed, are ſometimes amazing. It is
 “ ſaid, that Alexander trembled and grew pale, on
 “ ſeeing a picture of Palamedes, betrayed to death by
 “ his friends ; it bringing to his mind a ſtinging remembrance of his treatment of Ariſtonicus. Por-
 “ tia could bear, with an unſhaken conſtancy, her laſt
 “ ſeparation from Brutus ; but when ſhe ſaw, ſome
 “ hours after a picture of the parting of Hector and
 “ Andromache, ſhe burſt into a flood of tears. Full
 “ as ſeemed her ſorrow, the painter ſuggeſted new
 “ ideas of grief, or impreſſed more ſtrongly her *own*.”

Your question concerning the superiority of the ancients or moderns in this particular, is very easily answered. In most, if not *all* the fine arts, indeed, the former, according to my apprehension, are absolutely unrivalled. By the ancients, I *now* mean, particularly the Greeks.

Whether it was owing to the particular nature and freedom of their government—to the superior honors and encouragement that were lavished on genius and the arts in this more early period of society—whether to any particular superiority of organization in the natives of this country—whether to its beautiful scenery or the allegorical nature of a religion, which so much called painting, poetry and sculpture into exercise—or whether we may not ascribe it to an happy *combination* of all these separate causes, it is certain, that their taste and imagination were exquisite beyond those of any other people, and produced a degree of excellence in their artists, that we cannot find in any other age or country of the world.

Raphael, whom all Europe has so much praised, excelled only, as he formed himself upon the model of the *Greeks*. The Italians (observes an able judge,) may excel in colouring; but composition, drawing, the art of grouping, attitude, movement, expression, contrast, drapery, character and grace—all these, this great genius confessedly borrowed from the ancient statues and bas reliefs.

Palladio is the first of architects, Michael Angelo, Fiammingo, Algardi, the most celebrated sculptors, only for the same reason; they studied the Greeks. Yet Angelo was the boldest genius, that Italy ever had. “It was he, who conceived the idea of placing the
“pantheon in the air, and constructed the dome of St.
“Peter’s on the same dimensions.”

Nor in *letters* were the Greeks less the model of perfection. To emulate their best writers has been the

ambition of every succeeding age. And excellence has been attained only in proportion to the successfulness of this imitation.

The first and most complete *poem* in the world, is Grecian—the *Iliad* of Homer. It unites all the separate astonishing excellencies of this most difficult species of composition ; the majestic, the terrible, the pathetic and the sublime. Naturalists, philosophers, painters, poets, orators, metaphysicians have all, in various methods, dug from this mine, and still left it full of inexhaustible treasures. It is proverbially known how much the great Roman orator studied Homer, and indeed how much he has been praised by the whole world. I will give you a few testimonies in his favor.

The first critic, that ever existed, is Longinus, who wrote a treatise on the sublime : This is *his* opinion of the *Iliad* :

“ Those only, who have sublime and solid thoughts, can make elevated discourses, and, in this part, Homer chiefly excels, whose thoughts are all sublime, as may be seen in the description of the goddess, Discord, who has, says he, her head in the skies, and her feet upon the earth ; for it may be said, that that grandeur which he gives her, is less the measure of Discord, than of the capacity and elevation of Homer’s genius.” *Treatise on the Sublime.*

Again in another place : “ To Homer, that is, to him, who had received the applauses of the whole world.”

And, in a third passage, mentioning the number of men, who had endeavoured to imitate Homer, he observes :

“ Plato, however, is he, who has imitated him most, for he has drawn from this poet, as from a living spring, from which he has turned an infinite number of rivulets.”

Another excellent judge is Horace, who bears to this prince of poets, this honourable testimony, that he taught *philosophy* better than many, who were philosophers by *profession*.

A third critic of no inconsiderable talents has these lines in his favour :

On diroit que pour plaire instruit par la nature
Homere ait á Venus derobé sa ceinture ;
Son livre est d'agremens un fertile trsor,
Tout ce qu'il a touché se convertit en or.

Pope's opinion of him it is not necessary to recite ; and the Jerusalem Delivered of a great author, is, from beginning to end, a *tacit* comment on, for it is an attempt to imitate, his greatness.

Let me not omit the compliment of Dante, for it is worth recording :

Quegli é Omero poeta sovrano
Signor dell' altissimo canto
Che sovra gli altri, come Aquila, vola.

The best writers of the Augustan age of Rome formed themselves considerably on *Grecian* models. The most perfect authors in England, France and Italy ; Addison, Pope, Racine, Boileau, Tasso and Metastasio took the same method to arrive at perfection ; and one might challenge the whole world to produce any other poem, like the Iliad ; an orator, equal to Demosthenes ; such a finished tragedy as the Oedipus of Sophocles ; any figure in marble, like the Belvedere Apollo ; such fine and light drapery, as that of the Flora, or a female beauty, as perfect as the Venus of Medici.

The great Montesquieu was, for some time, in Italy, and, as you may suppose, no superficial observer. This was his decision concerning the Greeks. “ Taste
“ and the arts have been carried by them to such an

“ height, that to think to surpass, will be always not to know them.”

I have been thus diffuse on a subject, that may *appear*, but *is*, by no means foreign to your improvement, or above your comprehension, merely that you might form just ideas in your favourite art; that you might know why we say so much of classic or ancient writers; and why every person should emulate their manner, who wishes, even by a single sentence, to please. I will close this letter with adding my *own* grateful tribute to the venerable shade of a bard, that so much delighted my early years, and yet fills me with a pleasing enthusiasm, every time I peruse him. I will use the words of a French writer :

Recois l'eloge pur, l'hommage merite :
Je le dois a ton nom, comme a la verite.

Art de la Guerre.

Receive this pure applause, this homage due
To thy great name, because I know tis true.

LETTER XXXI.

THE Italians excel in some of the fine arts. In *music*, perhaps, they may justly claim a decisive superiority. Of *colouring* they are great masters. Amongst many other distinguished painters, they boast a Corregio. No one could do more honor to any nation. He is the very pupil of nature, and has wonderfully united elegance and ease. If Raphael shines in the *majestic*, he has all the *soft* and *amiable* graces.

In *landscape* painting, Italy is unrivalled. Those of Claude Lorrain are superior to any other master's. Perhaps one reason is, the beauty of the scenes, from which they are taken. Viewed collectively, there is

not, I should conceive, a more delightful and enchanting country. It seems to mingle all the soft and milder beauties of climate, with the magnificent and tremendous ; gentle hills, rich vallies, fruitful extensive vineyards, with craggy, rugged precipices, with the portentous aspect and caverns of *Ætna* ; the bay of Naples, with the formidable grandeur and thunder of *Vesuvio*.

No place has been the scene of so many memorable events, or given birth to such a number of distinguished men. Tuscany produced Dante, Petrarch, and Michael Angelo ; Livy was born at Padua ; Titian at Venice, and Ariosto at Ferrara. Urbino is justly proud of Raphael, and Parma of Corregio. Rome claims Tacitus and Lucretius, Arpinum, Cicero, and Venusium, Horace.

If my leisure and opportunities had been equal to my wishes, I should have gloried in traversing this country. Every step would have had a peculiar interest, and every scene revived those glowing descriptions of a Virgil or an Horace, that fascinated my *earliest* years. When a person has been some time, in the world, whatever recalls the *first* days of life, administers the sweetest pleasure. It is the picture of innocence and tranquility, whilst our maturer age is often a bustle or a storm.

In ancient Rome, it was a confessed maxim, that true politeness and taste were derived from the Grecians. And the Italian artists still owe much of their excellence to these primitive masters.

The *literary* taste of the Italians is very exceptional. It is a false sublime, a fictitious glitter, and a barren abundance, and has lost the true Attic salt of nature, of truth and simplicity. Hence they are said to prefer the Gothic works of Dante, the absurdities of Ariosto, the extravagancies of Marini, and the tinsel

puerilities of Tasso, to the tender and impassioned descriptions of Metastasio.

The *French* seem to think themselves exclusive proprietors of every thing, that goes under the denomination of taste. And, indeed, they are universally esteemed a polished, easy, graceful and seducing people. Few of their writers, however, have much of the *profound*, or that bids fair for *duration*. Of *all* people, they seem *least* to have studied the classics. Their style, in general, wants energy and compactness. In *many* words they communicate but *few* ideas, and their imagination is permitted to run *wild* without hearkening to the sober dictates of judgment. Though trees in blossom are a beautiful object, yet the solid *advantage* lies in their *fruit*. I could except many great names from this, *apparently*, invidious censure. One, particularly, I will mention—that is Montesquieu. This man will do them honor with all other nations, and the most distant posterity. His *Esprit de Loix* is, indeed, a most astonishing performance. It unites the depth, the phlegm and patience of some other countries, with the vivacity of that, in which it sprung.

I do not think that England is, by any means, either from climate, or other fostering circumstances, the *natural* soil of the *fine arts*. The hot bed of riches it is true, has raised a few *exotics*, in *this* way to a superior *flavour*; and public encouragement called forth many virtuosos from other countries. But in fact, we are too much engaged with trade and politics to cultivate, in any extraordinary degree, the *finer* emotions. Commercial habits, manufactures, and the love of money, wherever they prevail, will always be the grave of *virtù* and of taste. In point of *polite* learning this kingdom has, long since, according to my apprehension, been at its zenith. The sun of its Augustan age appears to be set. But for *profound* knowledge and genius, no nation, perhaps in the known world *has* been

more distinguished. Shakespeare, Milton, Locke, Sir Isaac Newton ! what other country can produce such a group ? Nor shall we want models of the most graceful in *writing*, whilst we can read the works of Addison, many papers in the World, the Letters of Lady Wortley Montague, or those of Chesterfield.

I do not mean to deny, but that *general science* is more cultivated among the moderns, than it ever was by the ancients, and, in the *present* age, more than at any former period whatever. Natural philosophy in all its branches, chemistry, mathematics, history, politics, jurisprudence, and the mechanical arts have arrived to a wonderful degree of perfection, and are daily receiving fresh accessions of improvement. But I must still assert, that polite learning seems to have flourished most in the days of Swift, Pope and Addison. What can be the reason ? Is it that being *then* more new, as having but just emerged from the darkness of the times, it was treated with that superior respect and deference, we extend to a stranger ? Is there a greater *dearth* of real genius ? *That* we cannot suppose, if we give ourselves only leisure to consider the many exalted characters, which Britain boasts. The case, I think, is clear, that a most extended commerce has debased our feelings and vitiated our taste ; that the grand, *political* interests of the nation, as it is *now* circumstanced, require a most unremitting attention ; that the high road to honors and emoluments chiefly lying through the bar or senate, the greatest talents in the kingdom are turned into these channels. Men rather chuse to wrangle and *debate* themselves into affluence and titles, than starve on the mere, *shadowy* fame of an elegant production.

Wherever there is hope of patronage, genius springs of course ; and though his present Majesty has always been a liberal encourager of polite knowledge, yet nothing can effectually counteract the wide, and most unlimited agency of this *national* situation.

Many writers, in our *Augustan* age, arrived by their labours merely, not only to considerable affluence, but to high distinctions. They were caressed and honoured in the most fashionable circles. To reward and patronize talents, was a glory and a pride. It is very observable, that all the great, *literary* characters of the *present* times, who were born nearest to the period, which I have described, retain most of this liberal, *patronizing* spirit. I could, with great truth and *feeling* mention some names, if *situation* and peculiar circumstances would not expose me to the *false* suspicion of intending to pronounce fulsome panegyrics. But will not the whole world acquit me of partiality, if I glance at such illustrious names as the A—b—p of Y—k, the present Lord C—l—r, or the Earl of M—sf—d?

LETTER XXXII.

YOUR knowledge of the Italian language is much superior to my own. The little that I *have*, was acquired merely to read a few productions of their best authors, and be able to form some *comparative* idea of their merits or defects.

I am far from denying to this people the praise of great genius. But I should suppose, that it is not properly cultivated, and the reason, perhaps, may be, that, in *modern* Italy, learning meets but with little encouragement.

The bad taste of the Italians in *poetry*, is obvious from many instances. Dante, in *their* estimation, is superior to *all* men; and Ariosto, whom they consider as much beneath him, they exalt far above Homer himself.

Dante had, doubtless, wonderful abilities. He rises in many instances, to the sublime; and, for the times,

in which he lived, may justly be considered as a literary *prodigy*. But his work, on the whole, is but a *gothic* mass of various kinds of knowledge strangely heaped together without arrangement, design, or perspicuity. To compare *him* with the author of the *Iliad*, is to betray a total want of all the principles of enlightened criticism.

Ariosto shines in narrative. He tells a story with gracefulness and ease. Some of his descriptions are particularly splendid ; and his Orlando Furioso is a lively, and wonderfully various production. But how frequently does he fall into ridiculous absurdities, where he entirely loses sight of nature and of truth, forgetting that excellent rule of a judicious critic :

Tout doit tendre au bon sens ;
 Bien n'est beau que le vrai, le vrai seul est aimable.

Let *sense* be ever in your view,
 Nothing is *beautiful*, that is not *true* ;
 The *true* alone is lovely.

Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* has, indisputably, great merit. The subject is grand, and very happily chosen ; the language, elegant ; the versification, harmonious : but who can say, that it does not abound with false thoughts with infinite instances of *playing upon words* and a prodigious quantity of tinsel, or that it is not, in *the main*, disfigured with low conceits, and trifling puerilities.

No Italian writer *interests* so much, or has so nicely developed the human heart, as *Metastasio*. He had great advantages by being introduced, at an early period of his life, into the family of the celebrated Gravina, and there learning to explode the false taste of his country. He formed himself on the model of the ancients. He took Boileau and Horace for his guides,

and few men have succeeded better in painting tender scenes, or leaving a *durable* impression on the heart. Read his Canzonettes, particularly that which begins with *Grazie agl' inganni tuoi* ; an tell me whether I have formed an improper judgment.

LETTER XXXIII.

I HAVE now finished my recommendation of authors. I am apprehensive, indeed, of having mentioned too many. But from the whole you can *select* the few, you like, or which it is most convenient for you to purchase.

Some of these books, particularly those, which treat on religious subjects may not entertain you so much at present, as they will at some future period, when your taste and judgment are more effectually ripened ; but I did not know whether *then* I might have the opportunity of writing to you or whether I should even be in the world ; and I wished to give you something of a *systematic* plan, that might be consulted through every stage of your life.

The criticisms upon books, characters, &c. have not been introduced from a fastidious spirit, or with a view of displaying learning and talents, but to exercise and improve *your discriminating* faculties, and enliven the, *otherwise*, dull uniformity of didactic letters. I have only presumed to give my opinion ; and to *this*, in a land of liberty, and in an enlightened age, I conceive myself to have an equal right with the first scholar, or critic of the world.

Louisa, you well know, is not a *fiction* but a *real* character ; and, though my partiality may have heightened her merit, yet after all, it is inexpressibly great ; and I introduced her, as a pattern of female graces,

merely to avoid the formality of precepts, and the *authoritative* airs of a teacher. I considered this mode, as likely to communicate some little *interest* and variety to my letters ; and *that* appeared to me a motive, which, with *all* young people, should be consulted.

On the whole, consider me not as *dogmatizing*, but only as communicating to you, with great freedom and sincerity, the best sentiments, I can ; those, which convince your understanding, receive with candour ; the rest reject, and do not fancy me so conceited ; as even for a moment, to have persuaded myself that from *my* tribunal, there lies no appeal.

LETTER XXXIV.

MY DEAR LUCY,

IF I was called upon to write the history of a *woman's* trials and sorrows, I would date it from the moment when nature has pronounced her *marriageable*, and she feels that innocent desire of associating with the other sex, which needs not a blush. If I had a girl of my own, at this *critical* age, I should be full of the keenest apprehensions for her safety ; and, like the great poet, when the tempter was bent on seducing our first parents from their innocence and happiness, I should invoke the assistance of some guardian angel, to conduct her through the slippery and dangerous paths.

You must remember the passage ;

“ O for that warning voice, which he, who heard,” &c.

Marriage is, doubtless the most natural, innocent and useful state, if you can form it to any tolerable advantage. It bids fairest for that little portion of happiness, which this life admits ; and is, in some degree, a duty which, we owe to the world. If entered into from

proper motives, it is a source of the greatest benefits to the *community*, as well as of private comfort to ourselves. What are the highest blessings, unsweetened by society? How poignant are many sorrows of life, without a friend to alleviate and divide them! How many are the moments, how many are the exigencies, in which we want sympathy, tenderness, attention! And what is a moping *individual* to the world, compared with the woman who acts in the tender character of a wife, or parent, and, by a religious culture of an offspring, is training up inhabitants for the kingdom of heaven.

A *single* woman is, particularly, defenceless. She cannot move beyond the precincts of her house without apprehensions. She cannot go with ease or safety, into public. She is surrounded with many, real dangers, and fancy conjures up *more* spectres of its own, to disturb her repose.

As she goes down the *hill* of life, her friends *gradually* drop away from her, like leaves in the autumn, and leave her a pining, *solitary* creature. Even *brothers* and *sisters*, when married themselves, lose their usual fondness for *her*, in the ardours of a newly acquired connection; and she wanders through a wide, bustling world, uncomfortable in herself, uninteresting to others, *frequently* the sport of wanton ridicule, or a proverb of reproach.

Men are often too much engrossed with business, ambition or criminal pursuits to think very seriously of this connection; but if they happen to remain *single*, their very efforts become their amusement, and keep them from experiencing that *unquiet* indolence, which by *enervating* the mind, powerfully awakens imagination and the senses. A *woman* has abundant leisure to brood over her inquietude, and to nurse the vapours, till they terminate in disease. She has not so many methods for *dissipating* thought. Her element is her *household*, and the management of her children; and till she be-

comes a *mother*, she has not objects of consequence enough to occupy the mind, and preserve it from feeling unpleasant agitations.

I mean not, however, to insinuate, that there is any thing really *reproachful* in *virginity*, unless a woman *chooses* to render it such, by verifying the stigmas, which have been fixed upon it, and *substantiating*, in her *own* practice, the malevolence, envy, scandal, curiosity and spleen, which have, so often, *sarcastically* been imputed to the *sister-hood*. It *may* be, and sometimes, *is*, the choice of very amiable women, who would not marry *any*, but the man of their affections, or with whom they had a *rational* prospect of happiness; who having been by death or disappointment deprived of *one*, had a delicacy, that never admitted the idea of a second, attachment, or who were not so devoid of principle and taste, as to be connected with a *dissolute*, drunken, or *abandoned* person, whatever might be his fortune, or consequence or connexions. Women, who act from such principles, may be exposed to the *indelicate* scoffs of the *licentious*, but must have the unreserved esteem and veneration of all the sensible and the good.

It should not, however, be dissembled, (for it arises from natural principles,) that *married* women are generally more pleasing, than such, as never formed this connection. Their heart is continually refined, softened and enlarged by the exercise of all the *tender* feelings to an offspring, whilst the weighty concerns of their particular families raise them above that *frivolous* insipidity, which, with *whatever* justice, is the proverbial stigma of a single state.

A married woman, likewise, has banished that shy reserve, which *young* ladies *think* themselves, and, indeed, in some degree, *are* obliged to practise, but which, necessary as it may be, conceals many of their loveliest graces. The society, moreover, of a *sensible* man gives, to a female, a richer fund of ideas, a superior mode of

thinking and acting, agreeably tempers her vivacity with seriousness, and introduces her to many *improving* acquaintance, and entertaining circles, from which the *ceremonious coldness* of a *virgin* state, must have kept her, at an unapproachable distance.

Be not, however disappointed, if all your merit and amiableness do not secure to you *such* a connexion, as your principles and judgment can approve.

The lives of young men are so *undomesticated*, and, indeed, so criminal, that deserving women, in the present age, are far from receiving those attentions and civilities, to which, on every principle of justice and politeness, they are certainly entitled.

In proportion as the *morals* of men are depraved, marriage will, always, be unfashionable and rare ; and there are thousands amongst us, who have neither knowledge, sense or virtue enough to wish for all that delicacy of friendship, sprightliness of conversation or ease of manners, which only an accomplished woman can bestow, or for those innocent *domestic* enjoyments, which communicate the highest *flavour* to, and are the grand and ultimate end of, an intercourse betwixt the sexes.

Pleas of *inability* to *support* a family, of the *expensiveness* of wives, and their propensity to splendour and dissipation are used, I know, by some to soften their misconduct, and throw a *flimsy* veil over their crimes.

This is not a *proper* place for reasoning with *libertines* or rakes. Still, from their arguments, however trifling or fallacious, you may deduce this useful lesson ; that an extravagant turn for finery and shew is a great disadvantage to every woman ; that it is adverse to all her *happiest* prospects, and prevents not a few from ever addressing her, who, in reality, might have been the most faithful and obliging companions through life. Though immoral persons make this apology, from very unjustifiable motives, yet many others, in moderate

circumstances, might advance it with truth ; who, though they neither want integrity, knowledge, nor a sensibility to the charms and merit of a woman, would, yet, never think of *degrading* her to a condition, which they conceive to be beneath her wishes and her habits.

I have long considered the immoderate expensiveness of young ladies, as, by no means, favorable to their prospects or happiness, in *any* view. No parent can take a more certain method to make a daughter's life a scene of continual irritation and misfortune, than by thus ridiculously training her to high *expectations*. It has been the *gradual* death of many ; it has made the existence of *others* a burden, heavy to be borne. Nor can there even, in point of real taste, be a greater *mistake* in education. *True* dignity consisteth not in tinsel or shew. The nearest approach we can make to *superior* spirits, is to have as *few wants*, as possible, whilst we inhabit this tenement of clay.

LETTER XXXV.

IN your *manner* with the sex at large, I could wish you to avoid the *modern* forwardness, as well as that *shy reserve*, which throws a damp on all the *innocent* gaieties of life. The first bears upon its face, a *masculine* indelicacy ; the other is the effect of downright prudery, ill breeding, or affectation.

Some women affect a *coldness* in their deportment, and act, as if they supposed that every man, who approaches them, had a design on their person. Alas ! how miserably are they deceived ! How ridiculous is the vanity which gives birth to such a conduct ! *Men* are so much engaged in business, pleasure, and the amusements of the world, that the conquest of a *female* heart is often thought *beneath* their *ambition*. At any

rate it is *time* enough to be upon your guard, when you really perceive them bent on making *serious* advances.

Many of them will approach you with *flattery*. This, they have been led to think, the only, current coin, with the generality of females. If it be not very *gross*, bear it *with* good humour. Though you may *despise*, do not wantonly return, it with contempt. This is the method to make them enemies, and put them on avoiding your society forever. You may easily be civil, and yet convince them by your looks and manner, that you perfectly understand how to appreciate *indiscriminate* complaisance.

Though, by no means, *seriously* bent upon *matrimony*, yet not a few of them, will pay you flattering attentions. *These*, if you be not cautious, may, very insensibly, soften your heart, and ensnare your affections, particularly if they come from men, whose *general* character or manners you esteem. One caution, therefore, permit me to give you, with an *assurance* that it must be *religiously* observed, as you value either your dignity or repose—never to believe any man in *earnest*, till he makes the most *pointed* declarations in your favour.

Fashion has made it so much a matter of *form* to pay attentions to a woman, and, particularly, if she is smart, witty, beautiful; if she is celebrated for high connections, or accomplishments, or makes a good figure in public, that numbers of men will be *mechanically* led to flutter about you, who, *in fact*, mean only to *amuse* the moment, or do honour to their own good breeding and politeness.

Believe me, my dear girl, this gay and *lively* season will *soon* be at an *end*. Girls, that dwell on every body's tongue, and sport away, in all their gaudy colours, during *summer* months, like butterflies, are never heard of in the *winter*, but sink into a *torpid* state. They do not, however, resemble some insects in the

very happy, and enviable, privilege of rising with *renewed* charms. Once forgotten, they seldom revive, but are *displaced* by *other*, rising favourites for ever; and it has often been observed, that *those* women are most rarely thought of for wives, with whom we are the fondest of (what is called,) flirting, and of saying a thousand, civil things, without meaning or *design*.

With men of principle and integrity, you are always secure. They will religiously beware of engaging your affections, without honourable views. But *these* alas! where *women* are concerned, are not so numerous, as might be expected. More breaches of fidelity are observable in this intercourse, than in any other instance of the most trifling importance.

To entertain a *secret* partiality for a man, without knowing it *reciprocal*, is dreadful indeed. If you have address and fortitude enough not to betray it, and thus expose yourself to ridicule and censure, (and yet what prudence is *always* equal to the task?) it will cost you infinite grief, anxiety and vexation; and a victory over yourself, if you *do* gain it, may be at the expense of your health and constitution. It will, at the same time, totally unfit you for *any other* connection; for who would take the *body*, when another person is in possession of the *soul*?

If any man, therefore, can *deliberately* be so cruel, as to visit you frequently, and shew you every *particularity*, that is only short of this *grand* explanation, never see him in private; and, if that be insufficient, and you *still* feel tender sentiments towards him, determine to shun his company for ever. It is easier, remember, to extinguish a fire, that has but *just* broken out, than one, which has been gathering strength and *violence*, from a long *concealment*. Many have neglected this necessary precaution, and died silent *martyrs* to their fondness and imprudence. The eye of beauty has lan-

guished in solitude, or been dimmed with a flood of *irremediable* tears. The heart has throbbed with *unconquerable* tumults, which, *gradually* have dissolved an *elegant* frame, that deserved a much *better* fate. Undiscovered by the physician, they have baffled all the resources of his skill ; they have rendered ineffectual all the tenderness of friends, and *death* alone has administered that ease, which neither beauty, friends, nor fortune could bestow.

It is possible, that men may not *always* act from *unamiable* motives, when they carry their attentions to a considerable height, without an *explanation*. Their taste may have privately singled you out from all the rest of the world, whilst Providence has not propitiously raised them to circumstances, which they conceive to be worth your acceptance. They may have a delicacy, a dignity, and independence of mind, which would not easily brook a *repulse*, or an *inferior* situation ; and they may be, *very honourably*, probing by these, little methods, the state of your inclinations.

Of *these* circumstances you must endeavour to judge for yourself, or get some discerning, *impartial* and more *experienced* friend to be your adviser. If you suspect a person's conduct to arise from *such* motives, you cannot treat him with too much attention. He has paid you, in the most delicate and flattering manner, the highest compliment in the world ; and you may depend on his affection being more *sincere*, in proportion as it is less assuming, confident, or *obtrusive*.

If you *have* any regard for such a character, his penetration will have discovered it. Use no *affectation* to him. He will see through all its flimsy disguises. Attempt no *prudery* ; he will behold your bosom panting though the thin, *slight* veil, and the hypocrisy will disgust. Talk not of *fortune* or *circumstances* ; they have been the objects of *his* consideration. I know no method, but, with an honest candour, to throw your-

self, a fair, enchanting object, on his generous *protection*. If by any *concealment*, you should hurt that self-conscious dignity and affection, which will, always, attend such a mind, as this, he will never again sue to your *clemency*, but leave you to ruminate on the artifices, you have used, in an hopeless repentance.

If you suppose on the other hand, that any person *dallies* with your feelings from *wantonness*, or mere amusement, you cannot shew him too marked a contempt. Though delicacy will not permit you to glance at the *particular* impropriety of his conduct, yet there are a *thousand* methods of making him feel his own *insignificance*, and of changing the little plumage of his vanity, into a monument of his shame.

There is something so *unmanly* in sporting with the tender feelings of a *woman* ; there is something so truly despicable in the character of a person, who wishes a consequence, built upon the tears and distresses of those, whom all great and generous minds are disposed to protect, that if a female coquette is odious to *your* sex, a male one should be doubly abhorred by his *own*.

If a person once comes to a *serious* declaration in your favour, affect no *prudish* airs of reserve. If you really, feel an affection for him, and can indulge it with *prudence*, do not scruple to acknowledge, or to treat him with the greatest *openness* and candour. This will engage, for ever, the esteem of every *liberal* and *honest* man. If, from *any* circumstances, unforeseen at the time, you should be under the necessity of *dismissing* him, as a *lover*, you would never fail to retain him as a *friend* ; and though, with a base, *designing* person, such a conduct may expose you to some little inconvenience, yet *whose* will be the disgrace ? Leave him to the contempt and indignation of the sensible, and let him make the most of the *godlike* reflection, that he has

endeavoured to triumph over *artless innocence*, and unsuspecting sensibility.

There is, generally, too much *affectation* of coyness in this intercourse betwixt the sexes. I have no idea of a woman's *blushing* to *avow* an attachment. If she *has* it indeed, it will appear to a penetrating mind, even from her very efforts to *conceal* it. The involuntary *embarrassment*, the timid look, the modest blush, and the downcast eye are indisputable symptoms of a strong partiality, which cannot either be concealed or mistaken.

Your sex, I know have ideas of suspense, and fancy, that it heightens the merit of the prize.—But I dare not recommend such a *dangerous* expedient. If the cunning be discovered, the punishment may be a lasting coldness and neglect. I do not know any thing so really graceful as *unaffected simplicity*.

Never disclose the offers or preferences you receive, except to those friends, who are immediately interested in your decision. They are *secrets of honor*, which you should carry inviolate to your grave. It is ungenerous to make a man the subject of observation, perhaps, of *ridicule*, because he has tendered you his warmest affections; and the envy of your *own* sex will not be disposed to spare you, for such a palpable display of vanity and pride. If you intend to *marry*, it is the highest *impolicy*; and if you mean to *dismiss* him, it is *cruel* to aggravate dismissal with contempt.

LETTER XXXVI.

FROM the unfavourable sketch, I have given of the morals and sentiments of young men, it is not probable, that a woman of the greatest merit, will

have any prodigious number of admirers to *distract* her choice. Generally in the *present* state of things, if a lady *will* be married, she has a number of accommodations to make, many wishes to sacrifice, and many instances of private taste to be resigned. She must be content with a fortune *merely* without expecting many good or *great* qualities, annexed ; or if she seek the latter, she must *often* forego all hopes of the former.

If, however, you *should* have a number of suitors, (and, without any compliment, it is not impossible,) there are a few, general principles of most *essential* consequence to regulate your choice.

Fortune, splendour, greatness are the *alone* cry of mercenary friends. I am not *wholly* of *their* opinion. I have seen many *wretched* in marriage, with all the trappings of greatness. I have known a still greater number happy, who have had only “ a dinner of “ herbs and *love* therewith.”

Do not suffer your imagination to be dazzled with *mere* splendour. Never fancy, that *brilliance* is connected with the *mind*, or that the happiness of women, any more than that of men, “ consisteth in the abundance of the things, that she possesseth.”

An *immoderate* fondness for shew is a great *misfortune*. It has led many a poor girl to sacrifice herself to some illiterate boor, who had nothing but his affluence to recommend him. If such should ever be *your* misfortune, I need not mention what would be your feelings. If you was prudent enough to avoid all *other* evil consequences, (and many such, experience records, but delicacy forbears to mention,) you might live to envy the ruddy *un-ambitious* milk-maid, whose toils are sweetened by *conjugal* attachment, and whose *blooming* children cheer the *seeming* inselicities of life.

How wretched must be a woman, united to a man, whom she does not prefer to every other in the world !

What secret preferences must steal into her heart !
 What unquiet thoughts take possession of her fancy !
 And what can men of principle *call* such an act, but
legal prostitution ?

If I was a despotic tyrant, I would inflict this punishment on the woman I abhorred. She should entertain a private partiality for *one* person, and be married to *another*.

Never suffer yourself to *think* of a person, who has not *religious principle*. A good man *alone* is capable of true attachment, fidelity and affection.

Others may feel a *fugitive* passion ; but on this, alas ! you can place no dependence. It may be abated by caprice, supplanted by some, new favourite, palled by *possession*, and, at *any* rate, will last no longer, than your *personal* charms, though those charms may have faded by *almost* laying down your *life* for their sake, by bringing them a beautiful offspring into the world.

During the flattering season of *courtship*, men will always endeavour to appear in their *best* colours, and put on all the appearance of *good humour*. But supposing this good humour, *real*, it is but a *fluctuating*, unsteady principle, depending on the motion of the *blood and spirits*. Nothing, but *religion*, is permanent and *unchangeable*, always consistent, and always the same.

A man of *this* cast will never fail to treat you with *tendernefs* and attention. If little provocations happen, he will soften them with gentleness ; if offences come, he will be shielded with patience ; if his own temper be unhappy, he will correct it by the assistance of divine grace and of reflection ; if misfortunes assail you, he will bear them with resignation ; in every exigence, he will be a friend ; in all your troubles, a stay ; in your sickness, a physician ; and, when the last, convulsive moment comes, he will leave you with his tears, and with his blessings. All his *impetuous passions* he will suppress, from a sense of *duty* ; and if ever by an

unguarded sally, she should unfortunately have hurt your feelings, or violated your peace, he will suffer more pain from the private recollection, than he can possibly have inflicted upon you. Ten thousand cares, anxieties and vexations will mix with the married state. Religion is the only principle, that can infuse an healing balm, inspire *both* parties with serenity and hope, dispose them to *mutual* concessions and forbearance, and prompt them to share each others burdens with alacrity and ease.

Gay and volatile as your spirits may be *before* this union, when, as yet, no *great* trials or misfortunes have pressed on them, yet when you seriously think of having a family, and calling yourself mother of a numerous offspring, what possible comfort can you promise to yourself without a man of *solid* probity and virtue; one who will be regular in the discharge of all the religious, social and domestic duties; who will faithfully train up your *common* children in the fear of God, and not neglect their many interests and wants, and wishes for the turbid and licentious pleasures of the bottle, gaming, intrigue, the chace, the theatre, or for any other scenes of fashionable dissipation?

The *next* thing you should look for is a person of a *domestic* cast. This will, most frequently, be found in men of the most virtuous hearts and improved understandings. *They* will always have abundance of entertainment in private unknown to vulgar minds. And these will secure them from seeking their happiness in the *facilitious* pleasures of the world.

Of what consequence are all the good qualities of your husband, if you must be constantly separated from him? Your tenderness in this case will only be the instrument of a poignant affliction—your anxiety will be perpetually on the rack; your *jealousy* may be alarmed; and, in the best point of view, you will be a widow,

with only a *nominal* husband, and unprotected with all the *appearance* of protection.

Men, whose circumstances absolutely require such *absences*, should never think of this tender connexion. It is this *necessary* separation *after* marriage, and the *artificial* one, which *fashion* has created, that are the cause of half the disquiets, which infest this sacred state. True affection is only nursed by the parties living much together, in the stillness of retirement. It is in the *shade* chiefly, that the purest affections glow. It is from dwelling on the graces of a common offspring, and repeating, in the ease of familiar conversation, little domestic anecdotes, playfulness and events, that matrimonial friendship rises to its proper maturity and vigour. By constantly growing together, even *branches* become inseparably entwined.

The *last* thing, though I do not mention it, as absolutely necessary, yet highly desirable in a person, with whom you must spend *all* your days, is *sentiment and taste*. This will variegate every hour with a succession of pleasure, every scene with animated remarks, every incident with fresh conversation, and will make a little paradise of your deepest solitude, in which you will never want the poor resources of *foreign* entertainment.

Fortune surely should be considered. It were absurd to think of love, where there is not some prospect of a *decent* provision for your probable descendents. That decency depends on birth, habit and education. But if you can compass the other requisites, be as moderate as possible, in your demands of fortune. Virtue and affection have an amazing power of inspiring contentment. A morsel thus sweetened, will be pleasant to the taste. In a cottage so enlivened, joy will spring. Children, so educated, will be rich in goodness. The Almighty will look down from *heaven*, with approbation and crown the happy pair with the choicest of his blessings !

LETTER XXXVII.

NEVER think of marrying a *weak* man, in hopes of governing him. Silly people are often more peevish and refractory, than you would suppose ; but if you could even gain your point, and by great address and management rise to the helm, I should not, by any means, congratulate your success.

Women, that assume the reins, seldom manage them with dignity. Their authority breaks forth in numberless, petty instances of tyranny and caprice, which only render them miserable in themselves, as well as unamiable to every beholder. The quality, which shews a married lady to advantage, is a modest *submission* of her understanding to the man, whom she has not been ashamed to honour with her choice.

I have frequently mentioned Milton, as peculiarly happy in his ideas of, what constitutes, *conjugal propriety*. His Eve reveres her husband. She listens to his conversation, in order to be instructed. In him, she feels herself *annihilated* and absorbed. She always shews that deference and consciousness of *inferiority*, which, for the sake of *order*, the all wise Author of nature, *manifestly*, intended. The consequence is, that her character appears lovely to all, and that her associate, (as all sensible men *will*,) treats her with *double* tenderness and gives her every mark of a delicate protection :

He in delight

Both of her beauty, and *submissive* charms,
Smil'd with superior love.

To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorn'd,
My *author* and disposer, what *thou* kidd'st,
Unargu'd I obey ; so God ordains ;
God is thy law ; *thou*, mine ; to know *no more*
Is *woman's* happiest knowledge and her praise.

When men have lived single for fifty or sixty years, through a multiplicity of business, ambitious schemes, or perhaps from more *criminal* causes, it is no uncommon thing to see them, all at once, determined on wedlock, and paying their court to some fine, *blooming* girl of *eighteen*. Indeed, in the *present* state of things, if a woman be not married *early*, her chance is small ; so violent is the rage for youth and beauty, even in *decrepit* *beaus* !

There is something in this practice, that very grossly insults both your delicacy and understanding. It looks as if these *sovereign lords* of the creation, at the moment, when they *condescended* to pity your *distress*, and found no comfort in habits of another kind, could order the most elegant and fashionable amongst you, to come at a *call* !

It is true indeed, that they *do* make you a consideration. Your jointure is, generally, in proportion to the age of the party. The hundreds are increased, as the head is hoary, as the frame is enfeebled, or as wrinkles have contracted the countenance.

Never indulge the thought of marrying in this manner. Wherever there is great *disparity* of years, there cannot be any durable union of hearts. Gloom and gaiety do not easily assimilate. Nature has placed at a great distance from each other, the torrid and the frigid zones.

People's views of life, their sentiments, projects, companies, pleasures and amusements differ so exceedingly, at these different ages, that it is impossible their affections should be united. A thousand conflicts of taste and opinion, and as many causes of jealousy and dislike will mingle with so *injudicious* a connection.

A woman, in such *delicate* circumstances, where the heart is not engrossed by a *real* attachment, *may*, and probably *will*, see many persons more agreeable, than him, to whom *she* is bound by an indissoluble tie. If

She has prudence and principle enough to keep up appearances, and thus preserve her innocence in the eyes of the world, it can be no *supreme* felicity to be the wife of one man, whilst her heart is secretly panting for another. It is indeed a trial, which no splendour can recompence and no fortune ease. If she should ever be so unguarded as to *betray* such a preference, in any part of her conduct, her peace and happiness are lost for ever ! But admitting her to behave with the greatest propriety, and even to be attached to the *Sultan*, who owns her, still the *jealousy* of old men is a most amazingly irritable passion. It is that watchful dragon, which guards the Hesperian fruit ; and with a keen-eyed glance, will be apt to discover some hidden meaning in a look, impropriety in a gesture, or a violation of the marriage covenant in the most common civility. At any rate, it is no very flattering allotment to a woman, to be the *nurse* of a peevish, infirm or emaciated, old man, at an age, when she might claim the most delicate passion, and *reciprocal* endearments. What woman of spirit would *bear* to be suspected ? What christian should vow, at the *altar* of her God, an affection to a *man*, when her attachment was solely to his fortune ? And who that has read one page of human life, must not tremble at the consequences that have generally, attended such imprudent connexions ?

“ A reformed rake makes the best husband.” Does he ? It would be very extraordinary, if he should. Besides, are you very certain, that you have *power* to reform him ? It is a matter, that requires some deliberation. This reformation, if it is to be accomplished, must take place before marriage. *Then if ever*, is the period of *your* power. But how will you be assured that he is reformed ? If he *appears* so, is he not insidiously *concealing* his vices, to gain your affections ? And when he knows, they are secured, may he not, gradually, throw off the mask, and be dissipated, as be-

fore ? Profligacy of this kind is seldom eradicated. It resembles some *cutaneous* disorders, which *appear* to be healed, and yet are, continually, making themselves visible by fresh eruptions.

A man, who has carried on a criminal intercourse with immoral women is not to be trusted. His opinion of *all* females is an insult to their delicacy. His attachment is to *sex* alone, under particular *modifications*. On *him* virtue, knowledge, accomplishments and graces are miserably thrown away. To gratify an extinguishable thirst for *variety*, such a wretch is often seen to forsake the most deserving, wife to seek his usual, *fugitive* pleasure, with an abandoned, mercenary harlot.

What would you think of this ? Yet no graces, no affection, no delicacy, on your part, may be able to prevent it. It seems the *curse* of heaven, entailed on his vices, and, generally, pursues him even to the grave.

The supposed predilection of your sex for *rakes*, must, probably, arise from their ostentatious appearance, gaiety, spirits and assumed politeness. But how dearly is such tinsel purchased by an union with them ! How often has a *long*, harrassed life of poverty and remorse been the dreadful sacrifice to this indiscretion of a *moment*.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MEN in professions may be expected to possess the most *liberal* sentiments, as having enjoyed a superior education ; and their manners and society will, of course, be most agreeable and interesting to ladies. Military people are, *proverbially*, favourites.

I will not so much degrade the dignity of your sex, as to suppose, that it is the mere colour of their habits, which *dazzles* your eyes, and works such astonishing

miracles in their favour. There are reasons, which may account, more *rationally*, for your partiality, whilst they do more credit to your understanding.

Undistracted with cares and business, they are happy in that easy *disengagedness* of mind, which can exhaust all its efforts upon the single article of *pleasing*. With much time upon their hands, they have frequent opportunities of being in your company, and of feeling, or at least *affecting* admiration. Lively and volatile from an healthy life of activity and exercise, they easily assimilate with the manners of a sex, whose distinguishing grace is a cheerful vivacity. Having travelled through various places and kingdoms, they necessarily acquire that ease and urbanity of manners, which result from a *general* intercourse with mankind. Expected, *professionally*, to be men of courage, you may *suppose* them the best protectors of your person and your weakness. Their very choice of the army marks them for *genteel* notions and spirit; and any of these reasons is, perhaps, no disadvantage with a female heart. I should be sorry to suppose, that their general love of pleasure, gaiety and *intrigue* is amongst their recommendations to the favour of those, who *should*, uniformly, discourage by their *blushes* and their *frowns*, every species of levity and vice.

In fact, and to be impartial, the agreeableness of officers, is like that of *other* men. There is the *human* mixture of the good and the bad. I have always found, from my own observation, that the older and experienced are some of the most interesting characters in society. The various scenes, through which they have passed, give a sprightliness and *diversity* to their conversation, and their politeness lends it a charm. I have met with as many of the *younger* sort, who have seemed to think the *petty* ornament of a cockade an adequate substitute for all improvements of the mind ;

a shelter for litigious insolence and *puppyism*, and an exclusive security for the tenderest affections, and attachment of woman.

But this evil is not confined, merely, to the *army*. It is so in the church. How truly amiable are the experienced, the learned, and the exemplary of this profession, whose knowledge is happily tissued with devotion, and softened by a general intercourse with the world ! How many, on the other hand, when they are just initiated into the sacred office, ridiculously pique themselves on a *cassock* and a *scarf* ; and, under that solemn garb, go as far as possible, in the mazes of beauism, vanity, and affectation !

There are, doubtless, very amiable people in the army ; but their *general* notions and treatment of your sex, forbid me to wish that you should, ever, cultivate much acquaintance with them, because the circumstances, in which they are placed, render the thoughts of a *serious* connection, by no means desirable. If we could suppose their *principles* not to be injured by their *mode* of life ; if they could resign, from the moment of marriage, all their notions of unlimited gallantry, and pleasure, what is their pay, but a scanty subsistence for a solitary individual ? What is their life, but an unsettled pilgrimage from one country to another ? How often are they called, at a *moment's* warning, to fight, perhaps, to *perish*, for their king and country ? or, to die more suddenly, and more ignominiously, by the hands of a Duelist, who challenges them into *eternity* for the slightest provocation, perhaps for the misplacing only of a syllable !

In the midst of such alarming prospects, what has a woman to expect from marriage with them, but continual toils, unceasing dangers, perpetual apprehensions ; poverty, remorse, vexation, children, without provision, and sorrows, which the *lenient* hand of time, scarcely can assuage.

If you was ever so happily united to a man of this description, how dreadful must be the absences, you will have to bear, mixed as they will be, with a dissolving tenderness, and unavoidable alarms ; or, on the other hand, how insupportable your toils, “ with perils in the wilderness, perils by the sea, and perils amongst false brethren ; with weariness, and painfulness, with watchings, often ; with hunger and thirst ; with fastings, often ; with cold and nakedness.” Remember the fate of lady C—w—s, and drop a tear. That gaiety of heart, which, *once*, doted on a man for his smartness or vivacity, will find *too much* exercise for its penitence and grief in such *serious* afflictions.

LETTER XXXIX.

IN *several* requisites to an happy marriage *professional* men do not appear, by any means, the most eligible.

A great writer has called a physician, “ the mere play-thing of fortune.” However straitened in his circumstances, from having received an expensive education, he must assume particularly in the *metropolis*, the *appearance* of property merely to gain employment. This *fictitious* grandeur may involve him in difficulties for *many years*. His success, from the nature of things, must, generally be *slow*, nor will it ever depend so much on his *own* intrinsic merit, as on a fortunate coincidence of circumstances, wholly out of his power. If he succeeds, it will, frequently be *late in life* ; and, if he does *not*, he must be embarrassed indeed ! The children of *such* a person “ cannot dig, and to beg they are ashamed.” Poverty, sharpened by *refinement* and *sensibility*, is afflicting in the extreme !

I do not think the profession of the *law*, calculated to render a man, the most agreeable companion, in the still, unruffled shades of domestic life. It calls into continual exercise, the more *turbid* passions ; it begets an unpleasant spirit of caviling and contradiction, and has less tendency to nurse the *finer* feelings, than any of the other learned professions.

By being crowded together, at a *dangerous* age, in the Temple or Lincoln's Inn, young men are apt to contract a licentiousness of *morals*, a *laxity* of principles, a species of *scepticism* to palliate their vices, habits of *profaneness*, not a little dissipation, and so far as *your* sex is concerned, very dangerous notions.

Before marriage, military men and young lawyers are not, in my idea, the safest acquaintance. The first are only bent, without looking any further, on *domesticating* themselves, in agreeable families, by every polite attention to *wives and daughters*, and thus amusing many, leisure hours, which, in their state of continual peregrination, would be, otherwise, insupportable ; the latter, in general, scruple not to go great lengths in gallantry where they have no *serious* intention.

Beware of *such* society ; beware of your *heart*. Let not the *unblushing* front of a barrister, let not the mere *scarlet habit* of a *petit maitre*, who has studied the windings of the female heart, infinitely more, than *tactics*, or the art of war, let not a few civil sayings or flattering attentions beguile your imagination, or lay your prudence asleep. I do not think the commerce very safe. If I had a girl of my own, I would not expose her to so *dangerous* a trial. Many, doubtless, have come off conquerors, but *more* have fallen ; and their wounds and tears have made, upon *my* memory, a *lasting* impression.

Our imagination, however, annexes riches, honors, and even titles to the profession of the law. But this fancy often *misleads* us. It is true, that merit has a

greater chance in *this*, than in any other profession ; and it is certain, that a fortunate *few* have attained to very considerable greatness. We hear of a Mansfield, a Thurlow, a Kenyon, a Loughborough, a Law, an Erskine, and are dazzled with their names, their success, and honors. But not a word is said of a thousand others of the fraternity, whom, though possessed of considerable talents, fortune never chose to bring into the public view, or to distinguish with any of her favours.

But all these discouragements apart, if a lawyer is *eminent*, he can scarcely ever be at *home*. *Perpetual* cares and business surround him, and poison his repose. His wife and children must be *neglected*, and domestic endearments sacrificed to *tumultuous* cares. And if he be poor, no poverty can open the door to more chicanery, artifice, or meanness. At *any* rate, if he be a man of pure morals and religious principles, he has withstood the greatest temptations, that human nature can encounter, and for superior and heroic virtue, almost deserves a place in the kalendar of saints.

See now a man's partiality to his *own* profession ; but if it be not founded in reason, I beg you will reject it.

The office of *clergymen* calls them to a more regular and retired life, than that of most other men. Their exemption from the bustle and competitions of the world nurses innocence and sensibility ; and if their heart be not *very depraved*, their employments and studies must *soften* and refine it. Their education *should* have given them the power of entertaining, and their calling *supposes* not only *integrity*, but piety and virtue.

A man of *this* cast seems particularly calculated not only to *relish*, but to *enhance* the happiness of a married state. With hours at command, he has leisure for the tender offices of friendship, and the little, *sportive* play-

fulness of amusing conversation. Whilst the woodbine and the jessamine surround his modest mansion, he dreads no *unpropitious* accident, that shall drag him from his retreat, and can tread, with the faithful partner of his cares, the lonely, "silent haunts, which contemplation loves." He has time for superintending the instruction of his children, and calling their latent powers into exercise and action. He has opportunity to *realize* the pictures of a Milton, and watch the opening beauties of the *paradise* about him.

Let me, however, be candid, and give you the *possible* reverse of this piece. The church is in a very unhappy situation. That education, which renders the ecclesiastical agreeable, often sharpens his affliction. That refinement, which captivates the elegant and inexperienced, is the spear, which fetches drops of blood from his heart. Frequently without an *adequate* provision, and incapable, by any *secular* employment, of *improving* his circumstances, these *apparent* privileges are only his misfortune. The sensibility, which *loves* a woman, doubly mourns her allotment. That tenderness, which embraces children with such affection, *shudders* at their prospects. That independence, which *results* from *liberal* sentiments, startles at the thought of poverty or distress; and that peace, which he has found in the abodes of *solitude*, unfits him for the *turbulent* agitations of the world.

Many men, however, there are in this profession, very amply provided for; and, if one of these falls to your lot, with the habits and dispositions, that *should* result from his character, I think you may form every *rational* hope of comfort and enjoyment. Still, do not suppose me narrow or illiberal. There are, doubtless, numbers of worthy and amiable men in the *other* professions; there are, as certainly, many *worthless*, *immoral*, and profligate persons in the church. *General* rules admit of infinite exceptions. And as your heart

is disengaged, I meant only to state the influence of different habits and employments on the mind, and the probability of their conducing to happiness or misery in this *important* connexion. And I *still* must urge, that if a clergyman *be* a bad husband, it is in defiance of the strongest *inducements* to be *otherwise*, and of every disposition, which his studies and his prayers should have led him, either to cultivate in *himself*, or recommend to *others*.

LETTER XL.

A MERE *country squire* will be more attached to his *dogs*, his *hunting parties*, and horses, than he could be to any wife in the world. The most lovely graces, the most exquisite accomplishments will make no impression on his *debased* and vitiated mind. He will not be able even to *discover* them. From *him*, you must expect none of the little, soothing attentions. He will shock your delicacy with a thousand coarsenesses, without a *sensibility* that he is doing wrong; and if you should expostulate, he will place it only to the account of female prudery, conceit or affectation. He will converse with you *chiefly* on the delicious subjects of the bottle or the chace; and he will *occasionally* introduce you to the honor of an acquaintance with a number of ignorant ill bred boors, who will esteem you in exact proportion, as you want elegance of manner, sentiment or understanding!

Young ladies never act so injudiciously, as when they sacrifice themselves to stupid vulgarity. Their charms are never lost on men of sense, delicacy and politeness. By them their throne is established. It is in *their* hearts, that they have always a *sovereign* and undisputed sway.

I have now given you my sentiments very freely concerning a great variety of characters. But, marry whom you will, one further lesson is necessary to your happiness, as well as that of the person, with whom you are connected—and that is—to consider your *home*, as the chief scene of your pleasures, and your *exertion*.

Though a woman, *before* this union, may be admired for her accomplishments of dancing, dress, painting, singing, &c. yet *after* it, we expect her character to display something more *substantial*. To a man, who must spend his days in her company, all these little superficial decorations will speedily become insipid and unimportant. Love must be preserved by the qualities of the heart, and esteem secured by the domestic virtues.

A man does not want to be *dazzled* in this connexion, or to possess a partner, who seeks the admiration of coxcombs or beaux. He wants a person, who will kindly divide and alleviate his cares and prudently arrange his household concerns. He seeks not a coquette, a fashionist, a flirt, but a comfortable assistant, companion and friend.

Let not a woman's fancy dream of *perpetual* admiration. Let it not be sketching out ~~ethers~~ mazes of pleasure. The mistress of a family has ceased to be a *girl*. She can, *no longer*, be frivolous or childish with *impunity*. The *angel* of courtship has sunk into a woman, and that woman will be valued *principally* as her fondness lies in retirement, and her pleasures near the nursery of her children. Nor are these pleasures small. Whatever fashion thinks, they have a secret relish, which the world cannot give.

If *men* are expected to distinguish themselves by science, valour, eloquence or the arts, a woman's greatest praise consists in the order and good *government* of her *family*. Nor is this beneath the *dignity* of any female in the world. Never is she *greater* than in such *condescension*. It spoils no features. It places the very

finest in the happiest attitude, and in the most favourable light.

This exercise will be a sovereign preventive of the *vapours*; and every family, *without* it, must be a scene of disorder; a state of anarchy, in which there is no head to *govern*, and all the members seem unwilling to *obey*.

If we could see the *inside* of some fashionable houses, what a prospect would they present! The mistress at a masquerade or an opera—servants, drunken, extravagant, criminal!—Children, receiving their very first impressions from *their oaths and curses*—here, meat perishing, which might have fed the hungry—there, garments mouldering, which would have cloathed the naked—in one place, filth and nastiness concealed—in another valuable furniture tossed about, without decency and without care! No fortune can answer such *immoderate* expences. No comfort can consist with so much disorder. “A good woman looketh well to the ways of her household, and all her family is clothed in scarlet.”

A turn for dissipation, in *any* woman, is unseemly, but, in a *married* one, it is *criminal* in the extreme. If she loves her children, what can so much entertain her, as their lively prattle, as their innocent endearments, or unfolding their latent powers? If she loves her husband, what other society can be half so soothing, or half so delightful?

The tour of a woman's gaiety should terminate with marriage. From that moment, her pursuits should be solid, and her pleasures circumscribed within the limits of her household. So much as this, she vowed at the altar: so much her interests and her happiness require.

A wife, who is always gadding about, virtually tells the world, that she is unhappy in her connexion; that her vanity is most immoderate, or her taste most depraved.

What strips this union of its sweetest pleasures? What makes wives and husbands so indifferent to each other? Dissipation.

They spend so little time together in *private*; and it is chiefly in solitude, that affection springs.

If a man after the business and fatigues of the day, could return to an house, where a wife was engaged in domestic cares, and an attention to his offspring, he must be a monster of savageness and stupidity indeed, if he did not strongly feel the influence of her virtues, and if they did not convey a *soft* rapture to his soul.

What woman is most *really* admired in the world? The domestic. What woman has all the suffrages of the sensible, and the good? The domestic.

If I wished a lady's picture to appear to advantage, it should not be taken when she was dressing for an assembly, a levee or a birth night. She should be holding *one* lovely infant in her arms, and presenting a moral page, for the instruction of *another*.

Such a painter would give us the *finest* object in the world, and wrap *that* world, libertines and stoics, in one general admiration.

LETTER XLI.

I AM not at all surprized with the *insipid* life of the parties you mention. Their case is, by no means, uncommon. Nor would it have required any great penetration to have foretold the consequences of so hasty a connexion.

The truth is, the gentleman was strictly in the language of the world, a *beau d'esprit*, that is, he dressed smartly, frequented (what is esteemed) genteel company, and public places, drank, hunted, ran into the extremes of fashion, and had some fortune to support

it. In proportion as these little matters had engaged his mind, small attention had, you may suppose, been paid to the formation of his heart or understanding.

In this thoughtless period, it was the misfortune of this poor girl, with an elegant person and interesting manner, to fall in his way. She was beautiful; nature had designed her to please; and, if she had been connected with a sensible man, might have been moulded almost into any thing, that captivates in gracefulness, or astonishes in understanding. Her personal accomplishments inspired this *petit maitre* with a fugitive passion; his fortune was competent; dissimilarity of tastes, habits or abilities never was considered; tender tales were swallowed by her artless innocence, and his addresses were accepted. After a very short acquaintance, they are weary of each other. The force of beauty and of passion is exhausted. He has not taste enough for the delicacies of friendship, nor knowledge to entertain a lonely hour with edifying conversation, but flies to the bottle and his mad companions, for pleasures, which it is not in *her* power to bestow; whilst she, poor creature! has leisure to brood over her imprudence and misfortunes in still, domestic scenes, having learned, but alas! too late, that rational and *durable* enjoyment is only to be found with a person of virtue, principle and understanding.

For my own part, I had never any idea of such *early* marriages. If this girl had seen the *world*, and a variety of characters, she would not have submitted to such a connection; and if he had lived single, till he had learned the extent of his own understanding, or the nature of his *frivolous* and *criminal* habits, he would never have supposed, that mere innocence and beauty would have satisfied his vagrant, and *licentious* wishes!

Besides, what knowledge can a girl, at *her* age, have of the government of a family, or the arrangement of

domestic concerns? Servants will take advantage of her *inexperience*; and she must either be made a *dupe* to their artifices, or, from a narrow system of jealousy and suspicion, she will lose their confidence, and become the object of their *persecution*.

With respect to the *other* case, you mention, with so much concern, it was *equally* probable. People may accustom themselves to speak lightly of religion, in order to be esteemed men of spirit, and, in a thoughtless circle, pass for very excellent companions. But, when a man has a *family*, such a *levity* is infamous. If he *believes* his own principles, he cannot fail to be miserable; and he will find, that the fence he wishes to break down, is that, which guards the chastity and affection of a *wife*; the obedience, morals, and attention, of *children*; the respect, fidelity and principles of *servants*, and the whole of his affairs from sinking into a terrible ruin and confusion!

The general cause of suicide is a total want, or an unfortunate *fluctuation* of, principle. Without the comforts of religion, what support has any man to lean upon, in the day of trouble? If a person accustoms himself to sceptical reasonings, he believes, by degrees, that there *may* be no future torments for the wicked; and if he can once bring his mind to this unwarrantable persuasion, he will be ready to lay violent hands upon himself, whenever his pride is hurt by any fanciful degradation, and he cannot any longer, support the consequence, for which he has been distinguished by his fellow mortals.

LETTER XLII.

I WILL now give you the description of an *happier* marriage. I have been spending a few days in a

family, who have long lived in my esteem, and of whom you have often heard me speak in terms of veneration.

My friendship with Eugenio, (for so I will call the gentleman,) was formed in those early years, when unsuspicious hearts vibrate to each other, without ceremony or reserve. For his lady, so soon as introduced to her, I felt a very *assimilating* partiality. We mingled souls at our first meeting, and they have never since, discorded for a moment.

Eugenio is a man of considerable learning, and still greater taste. In every thing that relates to polite knowledge, he has not many superiors in his age. He is complete master of music, painting and poetry. In architecture, his skill is very considerable. In all the phenomena of *natural* history, he is *professedly*, a connoisseur. The best writers of Greece and Rome lie constantly on his table, and amuse many of his leisure hours.

Nature has given to his amiable lady, superior understanding, which has been improved by a good education, and polished by the best company in the kingdom. Her mother was one of those *uncommon* women, who esteemed it her highest dignity to be *herself* the nurse and governess of her children, and taught them to mingle accomplishments with knowledge, the *ornamental* graces, with domestic assiduity.

I will leave *you* to judge, what must be the consequences of such an union. Think how Eugenio must have improved such a woman ! Imagine how this lady must have *blest* such a man !

In this family, I am quite in my element. I read, stroll, think, or amuse myself without censure or restraint. I feel a sovereign pity for the world of fashion, and forget that there are any charms in ambition, or any sorrows in disappointment.

Their fortune is just, what it should be, for solid contentment ; too little to inspire a fantastic emulation

with the manners of the *great* world ; too large to admit of embarrassment or want. It is, in short, neither more nor less, than £1000 *per annum*. Their family consists of two fine boys, and one girl, who is half as amiable, and distinguished, as Louisa.

Though the fashionable world would think such circumstances narrow, yet that economy, which can do *every* thing, has made them very comfortable, and their entire complacency in each other's company, rich indeed ! They do not dissipate their fortune in expensive journeys, to, or by residence in, the metropolis, and are too happy in *themselves*, to be frequently seen in any other places of dissipation.

This, my dear Lucy, is the happiest of lives.—After all our ambition, and all our struggles, it is chiefly in the *shade*, that we must find contentment. The pleasures *there* are calm ; they are pleasures of the *heart*.

Their house is situated, at two miles distance from a considerable town in the county of —, upon an eminence, which commands a full view of the city, but has its aspect to those woods and shades, with which its owners are infinitely more conversant, than the more noisy scenes of dissipated life. Elegant, but not superb, and spacious, tho' plain, it expresses the cultivated taste of its inhabitants, and the hospitable kindness that reigns within.

The pleasure grounds and gardens are in that unornamented style, which to me, is always particularly pleasing. Nature has not been wholly sacrificed to art, nor wildness to refinement.—The wilderness here and there presents you with all its shaggy luxuriance, and venerable glooms. You rove imbosomed in woods and thickets, and are mingled at a distance from every prying eye, in those silent haunts of solitude, which poetry has always decked with its charms. Here the hand of the Creator has formed a grotto, and art has

not destroyed it ; there an alcove, and the pruning knife has not *officiously* separated the intertwining branches. In one place, a little fountain murmurs, at its ease, and nothing has attempted to divert it from its original channel. In another you have tufted beauties, a cascade, a lawn, an hill or a valley, beautifully interspersed, exactly as they were formed by the hand of nature, in one of those more sportive moments, when she wished to please.

Through the branches of a beautiful hanging wood, which lies before the house, you descry the glittering spire of the parish church, belonging to the village, of which Eugenio is the patron, and a very exemplary clergyman, the present incumbent. It is placed on a *rising* ground, as if continually aspiring to that heaven, to which its excellent pastor is always calling the affections of his people. It is built in that gothic style, which I always most approved in this sacred kind of structure, as best adapted to inspire the mind with seriousness and devotion. But it is not from the mere beauty of the place, or the deliciousness of its situation, that its enviable owners derive their happiness. They expect not from shrubs or blossoms, or the most enchanting scenery, the pleasures of the heart. They know, that the richest prospects would soon fade upon the eye, if they did not derive a fresh and lively bloom from principle *within*.

In an age of levity, this happy pair are not ashamed to be thought religious. They are persuaded, that their blessings could have no *permanency* or relish, if unsanctified with the smile and protection of heaven. Their house is, in fact, a temple, where prayers and praises, are regularly offered up, every night and morning, to the great Author and preserver of their lives. Every servant is required to attend the service ; and they are all *occasionally*, instructed in their duties to God and man. They have likewise, each a little

library of devotional tracts, which have been presented to them by their generous superiors. I had the curiosity one day, to examine the title pages, and found them, principally to consist of the great importance of a Religious Life ; Beveridge's Private Thoughts and Resolutions ; Taylor's Holy Living and Dying ; Advice against swearing, drunkenness, profaneness, &c. in little tracts from the Society, for promoting Christian Knowledge ; Wilson on the Sacrament ; the Christian Pattern ; Henry's Pleasantness of a Religious Life, &c.

It would delight you to observe with what a mixture of love and reverence, these servants approach their *real* benefactors. You hear nothing, under *this* roof of those feuds and animosities, which so much embitter the happiness of families. " They live as " brethren together in unity." The only contention is, which shall be most ardent, assiduous and vigilant in the performance of their duty.

If Maria (Eugenio's lady,) has the *slightest* indisposition, you might read it, without asking a syllable, in the anxious looks and gestures of all her attendants. She was lately confined with a nervous fever ; and it would have astonished you to see the unaffected grief and concern, expressed in their looks. " What (said " they) will become of our excellent master, if he " should lose the most amiable woman in the world ?"

The piety of these people is the more engaging, because it is always *cheerful* and serene. It proceeds from *reason*, and it encourages no *unnatural* austerity or gloom. It is mixed with sentiment ; it is graced with knowledge, and guided by discretion. Who would not pique himself on a friendship with such a family ? Who would not wish that friendship to be eternal ?

When I have added *you* to the group, I fancy myself in possession of almost every thing, that mortality can give, and wish only the continuance of my enjoyments.

LETTER XLIII.

MANY people of fortune are uncomfortable in marriage, for want of *employment*, or of something to give an *interest* to the, otherwise, *insipid* uniformity of the same excursions, visits, company, or entertainments. This is never the case within the walls of Eugenio. He is always introducing, from incidents as they rise, some useful and entertaining topics of conversation. A news-paper, books, the garden, flowers, plants, shrubs, history, the azure vault of heaven, stars, planets, or even a common *insect*, furnish to this worthy family, ample subjects for observation, ever edifying, and ever new. His lady has taste and information enough to enter into the spirit of all these descriptions; and the *general* scene is, not a little enlivened by the mode, in which they treat and educate their children.

My good friend is persuaded, that public education, as it is *generally* managed, is more calculated to teach languages and science, than to inculcate *principles* or *morals*; and, therefore, keeps his sons at home, till they have acquired a sufficient stock of virtue to serve them as an antidote against the dangers of the world. They have, however, their regular school hours and exercises, which are observed with the most undeviating punctuality. The older of the boys has made a considerable proficiency in the Latin Language. He has abridged the English and the Roman histories, and is completely versed in heathen mythology. But, above all, he is instructed in the fundamentals of religion, and of his duty to God and man. The scriptures make a part of his daily reading; and the sensible parent embellishes them with such a number of striking observations, as greatly interest the *curiosity*, and fix the attention of his uninitiated pupil.

With Rollin's *Belles Lettres*, and the Abbé Milot's *Elementes sur l'histoire*, he is perfectly acquainted. The latter he is abridging ; and Telemachus is warmly pressed on his attention, as containing those immortal lessons of virtue, which alone can dignify any character or station.

Eugenio has been at the pains of throwing select parts of Seneca, Marcus Antoninus, and the *Memorabilia* of Xenophon into an English dress, for the advantage of his little family. He has selected a system of Ethics, and almost of divinity, from the entertaining works of Addison, Johnson, The World, &c. and the arrangement is so excellent, that it ought to be made public for the benefit of mankind.

The first morning, that I spent under this happy roof, I was awakened from my slumbers by the soft harmonious voice of Miss —, who was chanting to the harpsicord, an early hymn of gratitude and devotion to her merciful Creator. It was taken from the *Spectator*.

When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys ;
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love and praise.

The whole reminded me of the words of an ingenious poet :

J'entends encore sa voix, ce langage, enchanteur,
Et ces sons souverains de l'oreille et du cœur.

Her voice th' enchanting language, *still* I hear,
Those sov'reign accents of the heart, and ear.

This is her constant practice every morning, at six o'clock ; and it has the happiest effect on her temper and spirits, for the rest of the day. It soothes the soul to harmony, and cherishes all the gentler emotions.

Immediately after this was finished, the lovely girl took a walk into the garden, as she regularly does, when the weather will permit, to observe the gradual progress, health and vegetation of her plants and flowers. I requested the honor of attending her, and was amazed, young as she is, with her knowledge of natural history, and with the judicious remarks she made on the power and goodness, on the wisdom and contrivance of the magnificent Creator.

Before breakfast, Maria (their mother,) hears all the children together read the psalms and lessons for the day. To this pious exercise I was not invited ; but I doubt not it was a specimen of female eloquence, descanting on the vanity of every thing, but devotion, and glancing at the dangers and temptations of the world.

The employment of this good family is as strict, as usual, and not less pleasing even upon Sundays.

The *first* exercise of this day, after the accustomed hymn of praise to their Creator, is to abridge a few pages of Wilson's Indian Instructed, or of Secker's Lectures on the Catechism. After the service, all the children give in, to the best of their power, an account of the sermon, which they have heard. The comparison of their different merits is pleasing, and the very *contest* excites emulation.

When *this* is finished their father instructs them with a short *comment* on the lessons for the day. One happened to be the history of *Dives and Lazarus*. Very few have greater powers of the pathetic than my friend. He brought them all to tears with dwelling on the pitiable circumstances of the *beggar*, and poured this lesson into their *softened* minds, that riches are *apt* to harden the heart, and have no real dignity or use, but as employed in acts of *mercy* to our *neighbour*. He gave, to the parable at large, a new and *singular* aspect. He

observed, that luxury had led Dives to unbelief, and that unbelief had plunged him into hell.

On *another* occasion, he dwelt on the scriptural history of Haman. In him, he expatiated on the uncertainty and fickleness of all outward greatness, and the insufficiency of honors, stations, popularity to confer any *real* happiness on a mind, that had not submitted to *internal* government and the discipline of religion.

“What a trifle (said he,) deranged this greatman’s enjoyment! Because a poor Mordecai would not bow to his pomp, his honours lost their flavour, and his dignities their charm; his sleep went from him, and he refused to be comforted. If his passions had been subdued, and his soul regenerated with divine grace, he would have been contented in the lowest obscurity. A cottage would have given him more satisfaction than this palace. It would have been irradiated with hope, and it would have smiled with divine consolations.”

Eugenio is constant at *church*, and his deportment there is an excellent pattern to all its dependents. His features are marked with a serious fervour, and a cheerful dignity, when he is humbly presenting his supplications to the author of his being.

You would be charmed to see how the honest peasants dwell on his looks! what eulogies are expressed in every countenance! what fervent blessings are poured forth, when he stops to enquire about their families and concerns, and what earnest wishes, that his mansion may long retain him, for its owner, and that his continuance amongst them, may be lasting as their days!

Not behind him in any of the *milder* virtues, his consort *looks up* to him, with a conscious inferiority, as the pride of her heart. Blended with more *softness*, her piety is, if possible, still more engaging; but she seems to decline all *personal* consequence, and to be wholly absorbed in the superior lustre of his character and virtues. She receives the prayers and blessings of

their tenants, as if only due to the man of her affections ; and, though the zeal of the populace would convey her, in their *arms*, yet, when Eugenio offers his hand to lift her into the carriage, her eyes sparkle with peculiar cheerfulness, and strongly express both her love and gratitude to her protector and her friend.

It is no wonder that they are so much admired. No wonder that every tongue loads them with blessings. This is but the *speculative* part of their piety ; the *practical* is more useful and more engaging. They love their God ; they love their Redeemer, and for his sake they go about doing good. Not a tenant experiences an uncomfortable year, but he receives a considerable abatement in his rent. Not a person is injured in all the neighbourhood, but his cause is pleaded, and his wrongs are redressed. Not an old man exists, but he has something, by way of *pension*, from this virtuous family, to ease his infirmities, and pillow his declining age. Not a great man endeavours to take advantage of a lesser, but my friend, who is an excellent lawyer, undertakes the business, and exposes the oppressor to his merited contempt.

Every hour, that Maria can spare from her particular domestic employments, is spent in making garments, providing cordials, physic and accommodations for the naked, the sick and indigent of her village ; and there are times of the day, in which you would conclude, from the vast concourse of people, that their house was a professed *asylum* for poverty and distress.

But now comes out *the great secret of their happiness*.
 “ Alas ! ” said this good man to me, one night, after supper, when he was reviewing the actions of the day,
 “ your obliging partiality thinks me happy, and so indeed I am. In the tenderness, friendship, fidelity
 “ and discretion of my Maria, I have more than the
 “ treasures even of a world. But this sweet abode
 “ would soon cease to please, and the lovely woman

“ lose the greater part of her charms, if we were not
 “ both animated with christian sentiments, and if we
 “ did not contrive to relieve the *sameness* and to digni-
 “ ty the *littleness* of life by the activities of virtue.
 “ That divine philanthropy, which is the essence of
 “ religion, is the source of *our* pleasures. And, when
 “ I drop into the grave, I shall have but one single
 “ wish, that this amiable guide may be spared to my
 “ offspring, and that the poor may pronounce a last
 “ panegyric on me, with their prayers and tears. But
 “ how very selfish and how cruel is the desire ! What
 “ would become of the, *then*, lonely and disconsolate
 “ Maria ? Alas ! continually together in this retire-
 “ ment, continually endeared by growing acts of ten-
 “ derness, you cannot think how very much our hearts
 “ are united ! But *this* is the condition of all *human*
 “ happiness. The tenderest love must feel the bit-
 “ terest pangs from a separation. It is the decree of
 “ infinite wisdom, that this world should have no un-
 “ mixed satisfaction, to put us on *earnestly* seeking it
 “ in one, which is unfading and eternal.”

These are the sentiments of as *fine* a gentleman, as
 the age can boast ; of one, who would do honor to the
 politest circles, and has power to charm the most im-
 proved understandings. But *that* gentleman is a *chris-
 tian*. He has learned to sacrifice all glitter and ac-
 complishments at the banners of the cross. And *this*
 has made him so charitable a landlord, so active a pat-
 ron, so tender an husband, so agreeable a companion,
 so indulgent a parent, and so valuable a friend. Read
 this, ye conceited *coxcombs*, who fancy that the char-
 acter of gentleman consists in *levity* or *wickedness*, and
 blush at your mistake !

LETTER XLIV.

I CANNOT fully satisfy your inquiry. So far, however, as scripture and reason will be our guides, I will endeavour to accompany you into the pleasing speculation.

To you, who have buried so many dear and amiable friends, and had so *short* an enjoyment of them *here*, it is natural to inquire, what you may see, or know of them *hereafter*; whether you shall be able to *recognize* departed spirits after death, and wherein the joys of heaven will consist.

It is plain from sacred writ, that our present, *earthly*, will be changed into *glorious*, bodies, and our souls, as it were, sublimed or *re-modified*, as necessary to the enjoyment of future bliss, *whatever* it may be. Whilst therefore we are, in *part*, composed of *matter*, it is impossible that we should have a *full* conception, or that any *adequate* representation can be conveyed to us in *words*, of the real nature and *essence* of such pleasures, as in fact, are only adapted to minds of a much superior texture, and bodies of a more celestial and *divine* organization. Thus the scriptural images “ of thrones, “ sceptres, kingdoms, of shining as the stars of the firmament, of being clothed in white robes, and having palms in our hands, of feeding in green pastures, and being led beside living fountains of waters,” are not to be understood, as constituting any thing of the *real quality* of future happiness, but as imperfectly shadowing forth, by the *analogy* of sensible objects, joys, which, both in their *nature* and *degree*, are wholly raised above our present comprehension.

So strong and literally just is that passage; “ Eye “ has not seen nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things, which “ God has prepared for them, that love him.”

The same idea is, in some degree, intended, by St.

Paul, when he says, that, “ when carried up into the
 “ third heaven, he heard things, which it was impos-
 “ sible for man to utter :” he had, it should seem,
 the *idea* of them, but could not convey it, in *human*
 words, to the *human* understanding. It is sufficient
 for us to know, that these delights will be of a *spirit-*
ual nature, proceeding from the supreme, all-perfect
spirit, and adapted to the fullest capacities of those, he
 has been pleased to *glorify* ; that they will be exquisite,
 as unbounded power and wisdom and goodness can
 bestow, and lasting, as the days of that *eternal* heaven,
 in which, they spring.

That we shall be able to recognize *spirits*, and
 amongst others, those of our nearest *intimates* after death,
 is *probable* from the very nature of the soul, which can-
 not be supposed to lose its *consciousness* or *recollection*,
 whilst the body is sleeping in the dust of the earth——
 from the possibility, that an exquisite part of future hap-
 piness will arise from reviewing, along with *present*
 friends, the trials, temptations, and sorrows, which we
 overcame, along with them, upon earth——and, more
 especially, from the attributes of God, which seem
pledged to convince us, by, (as it were,) *ocular demon-*
stration, that those, who, we are well assured, suffered
 undeservedly, in various methods here, are rewarded
 hereafter, and that some guilty persons, who wanted no
 prosperities in *this* world, experience all the horrors of
 another.

To this doctrine, there is but one weak, and ill-found-
 ed objection ; that witnessing the misery of friends, if
 they died in a sinful state, must be a dreadful abatement
 of our own felicity. That is impossible. The affec-
 tion betwixt relatives *here* was implanted only for *tem-*
porary purposes, and will, in some cases, cease after
 death. The only attachment, *then*, will be, (as the
 only *rational* one, *always was*,) to souls, that *assimilate*
 in *real wisdom, purity and goodness*. We shall love, in

our degree, even as *God* loveth, not with the weakness of passion or instinct, but the unchangeable sublimity of order. “They, that do the will of our Father in heaven, will be our fathers and brethren, our sisters and mothers.”

How glorious and inexhaustible a source of happiness does such a prospect open to the mind ! With what rapture will a tender mother, who left a number of children behind her, with a thousand, anxious apprehensions for their safety, meet them in heaven, where their innocence is crowned, their trials are finished, and their eternal happiness secured ! With what dutiful transports will children embrace the religious parent, to whose counsels *under Providence*, they owe considerably their present glorification ! And what delight must it give both parties to reflect, that death can, no more divorce them from each other, nor a grain of sorrow poison their cup of bliss ! Affectionate brothers and sisters, *unavoidably* severed *here*, by various, important exigences, with what ardour will they renew their natural connection, and reciprocate each other’s joys ! Not a fear to rise upon their future prospects, not a cloud to darken the celestial sky !

Another delightful idea of heaven is, that it will bring to *maturity* all those amiable instincts, which were planted in us by the Deity, whilst we were on earth, but from a multitude of obstacles, or the shortness of life, could not attain their perfection.

Our strong thirst for happiness, it is, on all hands, allowed, that was only mocked in a world of *shadows*, will be fully gratified in one of glory.

It will, probably, be so with our passion for knowledge—friendship—society—which, when properly directed, are equally virtuous and useful propensities, and, therefore, alike proceed from the Author of every perfect gift.

How eagerly do some men thirst after knowledge, but how much are they retarded in the pursuit, by the imperfection of their present organs, the weakness of their bodily frame, by the long, lost space of childhood and old age, by the want of books, acquaintance, and other opportunities, or by the transitoriness of life itself!——or when all human advantages center in one, privileged man, enlightened as he may *seem*, what is his wisdom, but comparative folly? When contrasted with the immensity of science, and the inexhaustible wonders of creation, what does it resemble, but a grain, an atom, a drop of water, or a particle of sand on the sea shore? Here we see but through “a glass darkly.” A Newton and a Locke, after all their improvements, felt and confessed this *poverty* of soul.

But how sublime will be the pleasures of this intercourse in heaven, when the greatest men, that have ever lived, are all collected together from all quarters of the world! When there are no little envies, jealousies, interests or bigotries to interrupt their mutual concord and improvements! nor any languor, fatigue or disease in the renovated frame! When the Almighty shall have unlocked all the treasures of his wisdom, all the secrets of his government, and the wonders of his grace! When the soul shall have received such fresh and superior inlets of intelligence, and “we shall know, even as we are known.” The wondrous page of nature will then be plain. The book of Providence will open, in the most legible characters, on the enlarged mind. That mystery of redemption, into which the very angels have been desirous to look, will be unfolded, in all its abysses; and the consequence of such discoveries must be an inexpressible sensation of love, astonishment and rapture. “We shall not cease, day or night, to worship him, that sitteth on the throne, and the Lamb, that has washed us from our sins, in his own blood.”

The case, in all *probability*, will be the same with *friendship*. Friendship, balm of this uneasy state ! inspirer of virtuous thoughts and counsels ! medicine of life ! still chequered, still imperfect upon earth, mixed with caprice, with passion, with insincerity, and often chilled by death, (thousands of *congenial* souls prevented by seas, mountains, reserve of sex, bigotries of religion, peculiarities of education, from ever *uniting*,) this friendship shall, *there*, have all its fullest poignancy, and flourish in immortal bloom ! The amiable of all ages and nations shall be assembled together, frailities and death, and the *possibility* of separation, wholly done away !

Think only of the expansion and luxury the mind enjoys from unbofoming its pleasures or sorrows to a person upon earth, from the social glow and confidential conversation ! and imagine, for a moment, what this privilege must be, where all around us are friends—where friends are angels—and angels are continually imbibing fresh streams of knowledge, of purity and graces in the presence of their God !

Our *social* instinct likewise, will, doubtless, have a *similar* gratification. People are drawn together into *societies* on earth, by a similarity of tastes, pursuits, habits and improvements. The principle is *natural* and has many *laudable* effects ; and, from the nature of the human soul, which will, probably, be going through successive stages of improvement to all eternity, may be supposed, likely to *continue* in a glorified state. Thus, though holiness and purity be the *alone* medium of *admission* into these blessed mansions, yet societies may be formed of people of similar improvements and congenial tastes ; of holy philosophers, (suppose,) naturalists, divines, doubly endeared by this resemblance, and carrying their various researches to perfection, in a world, where knowledge is totally unobstructed, and in the presence of him, from whom all wisdom and all goodness

flows. Whilst the different mansions of heaven may resemble, on this principle, the scattered groups of stars in the firmament, and administer that charming and exquisite variety, which seems to be the wonderful plan of Providence through the *whole* creation.

Thus much, at least, may be fairly inferred, that the *intellectual* improvements, we have made *here*, will not *perish* in the *grave*. We shall, doubtless, in this respect, rise with the same views and *habits of thinking*, with which we died. How much men at present, differ, from this cause alone, so that the *least*, and the *most* enlightened, almost appear creatures of *another species*, needs not be observed. And, though a Boyle or a Bacon, would from an union in *goodness* only, be happy in the conversation of the most illiterate saint, yet, on all principles of *analogy*, it may, reasonably, be presumed, that their bliss could not fail to be infinitely heightened by the society of those, who, like them, had spent a whole life in laudable investigations.

But the *grand* idea is, that the "great I AM" will "be present!" He, who is the source of all perfection and blessings! He, who can open, in the mind, innumerable avenues of *inconceivable* enjoyment! Whose whole creation is but a ray, emanating from the plenitude of his happiness and glory, and who will certainly give his children all that their *enlarged* faculties can admit of pleasure and fruition.

Here we are continually mocked with the *appearance* of happiness, which, on trial, is always found checkered with ill. Here the sweetest odour has attendant briars; the most delicious landscape has its shade; the most, apparently, finished enjoyment, its alloy. Even the sweet, engaging child and friend, dear to us, as our own souls, bring inseparable anxieties, and a thousand unquiet apprehensions for their health, their innocence and peace. Every enviable acquisition is followed with its trouble; every accession of fortune or interest,

with its cares ; and, in the height of *seeming*, worldly bliss, trouble, still, will find, through various *chinks*, its moments of admission. But, in heaven, all will be unmixed, all will be perfect, all will be serene !

Such is my private opinion of heaven. Such is the paradise of my *imagination*. If it be innocent, I have a right to indulge it ; if you think it *visionary*, you are at liberty to reject it. If it be an *error*, it is, at least, a pleasing one ; and, if it serves to comfort life, or excite us to any laudable improvements, it has its uses in society, and must, *ultimately*, promote the glory of God.

I hope it is true, because time, which dissolves all earthly things, is ever on the wing, and I wish to have my intimacy with *you*, perpetuated through immortality.

LETTER XLV.

I AM truly concerned for your indisposition. Your nerves are relaxed, and your spirits cannot fail to be affected in proportion. The complaints of this age, principally, arise from inactivity and over-indulgence. We thwart nature, in a thousand instances, and, in as many, she retaliates the offence.

We almost *dissolve* in hot, carpeted rooms, instead of continually exposing our bodies to the open air. We go to sleep when we should be rising. We invent *artificial* methods of provoking an appetite, which can only be excited, in a proper manner, by labor and application. And *fastitious* amusements are vainly bidden to create those spirits, which should arise from exercise and air.

This may answer a *temporary* purpose, but, in the *end*, it would destroy the firmest constitution. It is, in fact, undermining the very ground, upon which we stand, and digging a *premature* grave under our feet.

To me, who follow nature, and am only a spectator of the bustling scenes around me, these things appear to have serious consequences. When I look at fine, enervated ladies, I tremble, by a sort of *involuntary* instinct, for the rising generation.

What a vigilant, *systematic* care did the ancient legislators bestow upon this sex ! To give them an healthy, vigorous constitution, and to consult, in *particular situations*, their ease and cheerfulness, was an object not beneath the attention of those heroes, who, by their valour and their talents, governed the world.

If you intend to have any comfort yourself, or be of any solid usefulness to others, you must be careful of your health. It is a plant, that requires continual nursing, and without the greatest attention, will *gradually* die.

You must not dissolve on *downy* pillows, till your frame is almost thrown into convulsions. You should rise with the *dawn*, and exercise gently, in the open air, particularly, on horseback. A little cheerful company will amuse, and keep your mind, from preying too much upon itself. Too much, on the other hand, will *oppress* your spirits, and aggravate your complaints.

Above all, if you wish a removal of your present indisposition, you must cautiously abstain from tea, particularly in mornings. However agreeable this beverage may be, it is, doubtless, the source of weak nerves, hysterical and hypochondriac affections, and of half those dreadful, *paralytic* symptoms, which have lately become so general and alarming.

Instead of *languishing* in elegant rooms, you should frequently be strolling into the fields or garden, if you would avoid the bitter draught of an apothecary, or innocently rob the physician of his fee. Your *diet* should be simple and moderate, confined to one dish, and that rather animal, than vegetable. You should eat sparingly, but *often*, and “ use a little wine for your “ stomach’s sake, and your, often, infirmities.” The

town has, doubtless, contributed to your disorder. When you return into the country, its pure air, I trust, and tranquil scenes will considerably restore you. Nature never intended such multitudes of people to be crowded together, and breathe the infinite, noxious effluvia of great cities. They are, in fact, the graves of mankind. We may *exist* in them for a time ; but it is only in the country, that health has any thing of its natural vigour, or life, of its enjoyment.

Do not *tamper* with your constitution. The whole power of medicine, in *your* case, does not afford the shadow of relief. Disorders of this kind baffle all the penetration of the medical fraternity. When they pronounce our case *nervous*, it is only saying, in so many words, that they cannot give us any adequate assistance.

The very nature, form, or texture of the nerves are, to this day, by no means, clearly ascertained, or fully understood. Perhaps, they compose that subtil and amazing union of body and soul, of matter and spirit, which eludes all enquiry. When they are disordered, I know no method; but to avoid all extremes, to fly into the country and keep the mind, if *possible*, easy and serene.

LETTER XLVI.

IF I had the opportunity, it would give me great pleasure to be of your party to Bath. But indeed I am quite fixed and stationary here ; unable to move, or visit even my nearest friends. Every day brings, along with it, a train of engagements ; and almost every hour, substantial duties, that cannot be omitted.

Nature, at times, is disposed to repine, and think such confinement an intolerable hardship, till I begin to reflect, that all durable pleasure is derived from employment, and that the only, real *dignity* of life consists in *doing good*.

They, who are *continually* in motion, and varying the scene, are not, that I can discover, more satisfied than myself. They carry their private burdens, along with them, over hills and mountains; and, when they have exhausted the whole circle of pleasures, still there is a great void in the soul.

I was once, for five weeks at Bath, and recollect it with a mixture of gratitude and pleasure. It was particularly serviceable to my health; and, on the whole, made impressions on my mind, that will never be erased.

The very *ride* to this place will amazingly revive you. Worcester-shire, at this season of the year, is one grand magnificent garden, whose air is perfume, whose scenery is blossoms, and whose walls are the spacious canopy of heaven. If you make Bristol in your way, I dare promise, that your curiosity will be amply gratified by a sight of that ancient and extensive city. Though the place, *in itself*, is low and dirty, yet the adjacent country is, perhaps, the most picturesque and beautiful in Britain. Clifton Hill is deliciously romantic; on one side commanding a full prospect of the city, and looking, on the other, towards that magnificent ocean, which brings the inhabitants all their merchandize and riches. At the foot of this eminence, you will descry the medicinal spring of the hot-wells, so celebrated for their efficacy in *consumptive* cases. Here you will be shocked with a number of walking *skeletons*, who are yellow with sickness, dying of consumptions, and breathing in their sighs, the emptiness and vanity of all human things. Thus is no human pleasure to be unmixed; and thus are thorns to be intertwined with the rose.

King's Weston Hill, in the environs of this place, has lately been celebrated by a poet. But the copy comes not up to the original. Nature has painted better, than the bard. It is visited by all strangers not only for its *own*, magnificent beauties, and wonderful scenery, but as an opportunity of beholding the sea,

which here opens, all at once, in a grand and unexpected expansion, on the astonished eye. If you are fortunate enough to have a fine day, you cannot behold a more sublime or striking curiosity.

When you arrive at your journey's end, every thing will delight you. Regular streets, magnificent buildings, sumptuous public rooms, delightful prospects, walks, hills, vallies, fountains, gardens, company, amusements—all will proclaim, that you are at Bath. You will feel, that this is the *paradise* of Britain ; and that the goddess of health has *here*, more particularly, fixed her abode. The mind, it is true, carries its secret burdens with it, into every situation ; but I know no place more calculated to efface melancholy impressions, or do away the bad effects of over exertion. The waters are a wonderful cordial to the stomach, and a powerful remover of that indigestion, which, to the studious and the fair of *sedentary* lives, is become so very general a complaint ; and the mind insensibly, loses its little, *fanciful* burdens in the *general* gaiety and sprightliness of the scene. There are, it must be confessed, many *invalids* ; but there are, likewise, multitudes of young people of both sexes, whose manners are very highly engaging, and whose faces wear a perpetual smile.

The amusements, to which you are admitted at a very moderate expence, are conducted with the strictest order and decorum ; and in the charms and splendour of a ball, as it is managed *here*, one would be led to fancy, that life was wholly composed of pleasure, if it did not occur, that all this brilliant throng have their private vexations, and the heart its own bitterness *within*.

The Abbey church pleases *me* more, than almost any sacred edifice, I have seen in the kingdom. It has not the grandeur and *magnificence* of some others, but it is more calculated for use, and yields to none in elegance and neatness.

Lady H——'s chapel is visited by all strangers, as an elegant curiosity of the solemn kind, more perhaps, from the melody and sweetness of the singing, than motives of devotion. The good woman, probably founded it in this bosom of pleasure, with a view of calling sinners of distinction to repentance. Her intention was amiable; and her piety, though grounded on the narrow and intolerant principles of Calvin, is entitled to respect. When people openly give their money, zeal, talents and labour to *any* cause, we may trust their *sincerity*. Nor should criticism expose the little *involuntary* errors of those, who scrupulously act up to the dictates of their conscience, and have thus literally, "left all and followed Christ."

Lady H——, it is said, has much injured her private fortune by her religious generosity; in building chapels, supporting preachers, and many other public, and private donations. Prudence, surely did not warrant so extravagant a sacrifice. But it is not necessary to expose a conduct, which so few will ever be disposed to imitate. *Over-righteousness* is not, by any means, the sin of *this* age.

I was indeed, not a little disgusted with the preacher of the evening, on which I happened to be at her ladyship's chapel. His discourse was a *violent*, inflammatory harangue without elegance, reasoning or connexion; and consisted, for the greater part, of a severe abuse of the established clergy. We *are*, perhaps, *too* languid and remiss in the discharge of our duty; but to expose with *virulence* and rancour, is not surely the method to *reform* us. Declamation or satire irritates. It is solid argument alone, mixed with love and gentleness, which soften and converts.

These people have not the *gracefulness* of piety.— They display not in their looks or manner, or *censures*, the "beauty of holiness." A severe critic, perhaps, would accuse them of spiritual pride, and give them

this motto, "Stand from me, for I am holier than thou." Their preachers appear deficient in general knowledge. They do not study force of argument or embellishments of style. They are not, indeed, without zeal ; but it is wild, extravagant and frantic.—They do not seem "pitiful or courteous, or to be possessed of that charity, which thinketh not evil."

The greatest disgrace to Bath are the *gambling parties* at the lower rooms. Would you believe it possible ? You may see people of the first distinction who are actuated with the *infernal* rage of play, mixing with a set of the very lowest, mercenary sharpers ! One would suppose that their pride and taste alone would not submit to such a *degradation*. But so little is all station, when it has forgotten its *real* dignity ; so groveling is the human mind, when it has lost sight of the true source of happiness, and "is hewing out for itself, broken cisterns, that can hold no water !" Even Chesterfield himself, with all his *parade of graces*, was a dupe to this most abominable practice !

The Avon, which runs through this city, filled me with great ideas. Shakespeare, Stratford, the Jubilee, immortal talents and immortal fame rushed into my mind, as often as I saw its soft, flowing stream roll silently along.

I should wish you to take a view of Prior Park, as a place which has so long been sacred to science and the muses. The late Mr. Allen was the Mæcenas of his times. You cannot tread the ground about it, without recollecting many of those celebrated wits, who were often invited to this hospitable retreat, and entertained its possessor with all that luxury of taste and luscious flow of soul which genius inspires.

A great character stamps an immortality on the places he frequents, or the houses he inhabits. Prior Park will be remembered, when its elegance is mouldered. *Fancy* will plant a laurel round this mansion of

taſte, which will continue to be green when the manſion itſelf ſhall have crumbled into atoms.

You will much oblige me by a frequency of letters, whilſt you are at Bath. They will improve your own talent at the *descriptive*. To me they will give a more lively recollection of pleaſures, which I once enjoyed. They will retrace upon my mind, agreeable ſcenes and images, which I have, *formerly*, beheld. They will intereſt an heart, that always vibrates to *your* pleaſures or your pains. They will relieve ſpirits that are too much oppreſſed by a variety of thoughts. *Whilſt* I read them, I ſhall forget, that I had ever a complaint, or that I ever was unhappy.

THE END.



